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ABSTRACT

This monograph seeks to bring understanding to one component of the advocacy field, that of advocacy and the aged, by overviewing this component through a series of articles. (Advocacy is an activity by which changes can be effected in a power structure to improve a subgroup's situation.) There are four parts to the document: part 1, entitled "Issues," contains an overview of advocacy as a social movement. In this part, Mark Berger views major philosophical approaches to the advocacy issue. Paul A. Kerschner explores the theory of pluralism as it applies to the aged. Neal E. Cutler examines common misconceptions regarding partisan political behavior on the part of older adults. Stephen McConnell, Dorothy Fleisher, Mel Spear, and Jodi Cohn discuss major organizational and policy problems which constitute the aging/advocacy issue. In part 2, entitled "Experiences," Margaret E. Kuhn, Hobart C. Jackson, and Barbara Kaplan provide case studies of advocacy by and for the elderly. In part 3, "Strategies," students of administration, planning, and community organizations are provided with a discussion of requisite tools for implementing advocacy efforts. Paul Nathanson and John L. Lamb focus on advocacy and the necessity of legal services. James A. Danowski emphasizes the use of media as a strategy for elderly advocate organizations. A selected bibliography is included in the final section. (CSS)

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preface

Advocacy has long been a time-honored process in the United States. From the first native American who stepped forth at the Pilgrims' harvest as a spokesperson for his fellow Indians to the Gray Panthers paying a house call on the American Medical Association, advocacy has been perceived as an indication of that side of man's nature known as selfish benevolence.

It is not a simple task, however, to define and delimit this elusive term. The difficulty one faces when trying to produce a definition is similar to that frustration expressed by lawyers and judges when trying to put parameters around pornography, "I can't define it, but I damn well recognize it when I see it." The Random House Dictionary of the English Language (1969), provides only the barest definition of this complex process: "act of pleading for, supporting, or recommending; active espousal."

Are students who are earnestly soliciting higher grades acting as self-advocates? Are the psychiatrists called by the prosecution in the Hearst trial advocates for a particular branch of psychiatry? Are the current Presidential candidates advocates for governmental reform? Were the early members of the NAACP advocates for America's Black population?

Perhaps some readers will be able to answer all the foregoing questions easily, thus making them advocates for all-encompassing definitions. I believe, however, we have allowed this term to take that familiar slide toward the "black hole" wherein clarity of terminology becomes merged with the penchant for jargon thus resulting in overuse and misunderstanding.

Unlike man's use of machines where frequent use creates an ever-increasing level of skill, the frequent use of a term may only ensure its incorrect installment in the written and verbal psyche of the nation.

This monograph seeks to bring a modicum of rationality and understanding to one component of the advocacy field, that of advocacy and the aged. The very existence of this work implies a variety of advocacy efforts. Advocacy on the part of the editor for an acknowledgement of the relevance and timeliness of the monograph; advocacy on the part of the authors for recognition of their scholarly efforts; and, advocacy on the part of all concerned for the encouragement of concerted action on the part of interest groups promoting the cause of America's elderly.

One of the covert benefits accruing to an author/editor is the right to ask and answer his or her own questions. That right being acknowledged, the question to ask at this point is, why the need for a monograph on advocacy efforts in the field of aging? In order to answer that question adequately we must take a brief look at the process we used to arrive at the final product.

The monograph you are about to read represents, we believe, the first comprehensive and coordinated attempt to address the much debated issue of advocacy efforts of and for the elderly. During the past ten years there have been numerous articles written for aging journals, a plethora of papers presented at professional conferences, impassioned speeches delivered at state and local conventions and in general much attention paid to the advocacy question. The bulk of this attention, however, has been highly fragmented with little effort made to provide substantive linkages or produce integrated manuals or monographs.

The contributors to this manual are engaged in programs which are in large part devoted to advocacy activities involving the older population. Some three years ago, a conference on advocacy was held at the Ethel Percy Andrus Gerontology Center in conjunction with the Summer Institute. As a result of these delibrations, it was determined that a series of papers on the advocacy issue would be of distinct benefit to the gerontological field.

Once the decision was made to produce the monograph, the next steps were that of deciding content, format, and audience approach. We determined that the selection of a single focus would limit the book's utility and perhaps draw artificial parameters around the issue. Therefore, as you will see, we moved towards an overview approach providing the reader with a series of articles dealing with issues ranging from a discussion of advocacy as a social issue to a case study on advocacy within the Area Agency on Aging system. Closure was not the goal towards which we moved, rather this was an attempt to delineate the major elements of the aging/advocacy question and thus to stimulate further activities on the part of our colleagues in the gerontological field.

Part I, "Issues," is introduced by an overview of advocacy as a social movement. Berger reviews the major philosophical approaches to the advocacy issue, thus providing the reader with an historical base upon which the remainder of the book rests. Kerschner, a public administrator and Director of Community Programs for the Andrus Center has explored the theory of pluralism as it applies to the aged as one of a number of competing groups in the society. A political scientist, Cutler, explores and dispels some of the common misconceptions regarding partisan political behavior on the part of older adults. McConnell, Fleisher, Spear and Cohn, representing the fields of

sociology, social work and planning have concisely discussed the major organizational and policy problems which constitute the aging/advocacy issue.

In Part II of the monograph, "Experiences," Kuhn, Convenor of the Gray Panthers, Jackson, Executive Director of the National Black Caucus, Griesel, formerly with Ralph Nader's Retired Professional Program, and Kaplan, a doctoral candidate in the USC School of Social Work, have provided the reader with four current and relevant case studies on advocacy by and for the elderly.

Part III, "Strategies," provides students of administration, planning and community organizations with a discussion of the requisite tools for implementing advocacy efforts in the field of aging. Nathanson and Lamb, National Senior Citizens Law Center, and Danowski, Communications Specialist with the Andrus Social Policy Laboratory, have focused on two specific vehicles or strategies, namely, legal services and the Media.

In addition to the specific chapters, we have included a selected bibliography on aging drawing heavily upon references provided by the Gray Panthers, Administration on Aging, and other similar sources.

The commitment demonstrated by the contributors to this monograph is deeply appreciated. We trust their interest and concern for this issue has resulted in the publication of a document which will be of great utility to you, the reader.

Special gratitude is also expressed here for those who worked so diligently on the preparation of the manuscripts: Dr. Richard Davis, Director of Publications at the Andrus Center, who cajoled, coerced and sweated through the entire process. Richard Bohen, whose wise and temperate counsel enabled a group of idiosyncratic faculty with the wherewithal for completion. Eleanor Hudson, Executive Secretary to Dr. Paul Kerschner, who typed and re-typed and successfully translated the maze of errors, erasures and cross-outs. Mary Isaac, Secretary to Richard Davis, who was responsible for the typing of the second, third, and fourth "final" drafts.

Paul A. Kerschner
June, 1976

contents

Page

Preface i

I. Issues

1. An Orienting Perspective on Advocacy
Mark Bercer 1

2. Power, Pluralism, and the Aged
Paul A. Kerschner 17

3. Resources for Senior Advocacy: Political Behavior and Partisan Flexibility
Neal E. Cutler 23

4. Interorganizational Issues and Advocacy for the Elderly
Stephen McConnell 41

5. Consumer Participation
Dorothy Fleisher 46

6. Federal Policies: Impact on Constituent Action
Mel Spear 61

7. Advocacy: Its Strength, Potential and Future
Jodi Cohn 72

II. Experiences

8. What Old People Want for Themselves and Others in Society
Margaret E. Kuhn 87

9. Black Advocacy, Techniques and Trials
Hobart C. Jackson 97

10. A Case Study of Advocacy
Barbara Kaplan 113

III. Strategies

11. Advocacy and the Necessity of Legal Services
Paul Nathanson and John L. Lamb 125

12. An Infographic Model of Media Access for Elderly Advocate Organizations
James A. Danowski 137

IV. A Selected Bibliography on Advocacy 150

advocacy and age

I.

ISSUES

1 An Orienting Perspective on Advocacy

Mark Berger

THE REASON FOR ADVOCACY

America has long claimed that it is a nation of opportunity for all its citizens and this egalitarian tradition has served as an inspiration for a variety of peoples with different ethnic, religious, and racial backgrounds. Limits of wealth and abundance do exist, however, and there is an unrelenting competition for access to goods and services. Out of this competition a hierarchical structure has developed for the allocation of resources. The resulting hierarchy, not entirely a consequence of fair competition, has established a system of individual and group priorities for access to the decision making structures. As a consequence, there is a non-equitable distribution of status and authority so that some segments of society enjoy a considerable advantage over others in determining the conditions under which we all exist and in directing the course of our major institutions.

Despite the realities of these power imbalances, the concepts of equal opportunity persist as a hope for individuals who dream of emerging from their deprived circumstances into a better future. For many minority groups this has been an elusive dream; hopes for a better tomorrow have frequently been squashed under the weight of a non-responsive power structure. Frustration and disillusionment are certainly not a new state of affairs for these groups.

Indeed, American history is filled with accounts of actions taken by unhappy, disenfranchised segments of society to bring about favorable changes.

These efforts to effect changes have assumed a variety of forms. Power struggles have resulted in violence (i.e., riots during the establishment of labor unions) as well as in less openly antagonistic efforts to reform some aspect of life. One form of collective reform behavior which has produced positive outcomes for a variety of groups is advocacy. Advocacy is an activity through which people who are closely identified with the needs of some socially, politically, or economically deprived subgroup can promote changes in the nature of the power structure so as to improve the situation of their client group.

For many of us, the word advocacy may conjure up images of Ralph Nader testifying before a congressional committee, a fiery black power figure delivering an emotion charged speech, or a corporation lobbyist wooing a powerful United States Senator by treating him to dinner at an elegant Washington restaurant. All of these images have some validity as indicators of the varied forms of activity that can be identified by the term advocacy. Although the groups having their interest articulated, the types of persons acting in their interests, and the forms of expression through which these interests may be pursued can all vary considerably, there is one common theme underlying the advocacy phenomenon: advocacy activities are designed to enable special interest groups to acquire and use power effectively to produce desired changes in society. In general, the development of an advocacy movement reflects the existence of unmet, collectively recognized needs among subgroups which have been lacking in the ability to realize effectively their objectives through socially prescribed channels.

THE ADVOCATE'S ROLE

It is the role of the advocate, then, to serve as an agent or representative of his client group's interests. The advocate is one who attempts to influence the persons or groups who have control over the situation with which the client group is dissatisfied in order to make the decision makers more responsive to client needs.

The necessity for advocate action in particular situations is due to the power imbalance between various segments of

society. Without a real opportunity to exercise some adequate level of self-determination, groups may suffer under conditions of severe material deprivation, social ridicule and rejection, and political-economic impotence. Needless-to-say, these conditions may also have harmful psychological consequences. Under such conditions of deprivation and/or discrimination, groups lacking an effective voice require some way of gaining access to and having an influence on the decision making structure. When agents who are sympathetic with their interests and well prepared to work in their behalf join the fray, it may enable the disenfranchised to obtain what they desire.

The number of advocates for a particular client population may be small or large depending on the circumstances or the situation. They may be individuals who are identifiable as part of the client population in whose interest they act, as concerned persons from outside the client group, or as a conglomerate of those who are members of the disenfranchised group and those who are not. It may not be essential that advocates identify closely with their clients' interests as long as they function effectively. Many lawyers, for example, can successfully represent a client with whom they are not in sympathy. Nevertheless, a strong sense of the acceptability of a client group's claims usually enhances the likelihood of success in advocacy.

Advocacy can assume many forms of active expression. Some advocates have concentrated on influencing legislative structures to make new laws or change old ones. Others may involve the organization of sympathizers to exert pressure on businesses or industries whose practices are regarded as offensive or irresponsible in some way. Still other types may focus on public arousal through mass media campaigns.

In some instances the kinds of activities just mentioned occur as components in a kind of collective behavioral phenomenon known as a social movement. This is usually a relatively large scale collective activity whose particular goals for change or revision are less narrowly defined, whose adherents tend to be more diverse in background and motivation for involvement, and whose tactics and strategies are generally less well organized and prepared. To the extent that certain activities which have occurred during the course of social movements have been illustrative of particular aspects of advocacy behavior, they will serve as examples in this chapter. It is not the intention here to cover social

movements in any respect other than when they are relevant to advocacy.

ADVOCACY AND POWER RELATIONSHIPS

Insofar as advocacy is a process whereby weak or powerless people may have their shared interests promoted effectively by a select group of reform oriented agents, it is important to understand the significance of the power relationships underlying the interactions between decision-makers and the many special interest groups affected by their actions. Power is a key force whose potential is manifest in the translation of need and interest into material realization or effective outcomes in society. Hence its importance in the advocacy process derives from the fact that it is the medium through which reformers or seekers of change must act. The extent to which advocates have an awareness of how power is used by those in control and an understanding of how they can generate and exercise power in their quest for reform, enhances their chances of acting effectively.

In developing an understanding of power relationships, it will be instructive to examine two major, somewhat contradictory perspectives on the control structure in American society, formulated by observers of the socio-political scene.

The Pluralistic Perspective. The viewpoint most consistent with American democratic and egalitarian ideals is the pluralistic one. Those espousing a pluralist interpretation contend that the American system offers an arena for the "free" expression of diverse group interests. The resolution of public policy, according to this interpretation, represents the outcome of compromises between fairly well balanced competing interest blocs, or the ascendance of a group or coalition's particular interests over weaker opposition. The pluralistic system is perceived as an open one in that avenues of communication and influence exist, and because those in control positions behave in open forums so their decisions can be monitored and they can be held accountable. Properly prepared interest groups should have substantial opportunity to exert an influence over such a system (Dabaghian, 1970).

The Power Elite Perspective. In contrast to the open model of decision making offered via the pluralist orientation, there is an opposing viewpoint which focuses on the

existence of a power elite. This position has been represented by the late C. Wright Mills (1963) who depicted a control structure in American society relatively closed to most people. Mills explains that the control mechanisms of American institutions have become increasingly centralized as technological advances have concentrated the locus of decision making authority within a progressively smaller and more select group of leaders. He explains that persons in the three spheres of high level leadership, the economic, the political, and the military, share many commonalities in interests, values, and backgrounds. Thus, a homogeneous fraternity of elite power brokers is virtually running the country on its own.

What are the implications of these conflicting perspectives in assessing the probable effectiveness of advocacy as a mechanism for inducing change? According to the pluralistic viewpoint, the advocate is confronted by a decision making system open to his influence given that he is personally capable of pursuing effective intervention strategies. As an advocate, he must know what to do and how to implement his plans in order to achieve the desired effects. Later on, the what and the how of advocacy will be discussed in more detail. For the moment, it suffices to say that advocacy should work well in a pluralistic system. The power elite model presents a much less accessible power structure, one fairly unreceptive to the efforts by advocates to exert pressure on decision makers. Accordingly, the prognosis for success in advocacy is better in a society which operates as the pluralists describe it than it is in a society which conforms to Mills' model of an elite decision maker structure.

Although there are numerous instances of non-responsiveness in public policy which appear to be consistent with the Mills thesis of a power elite, there are also instances in which the domination of select decision makers has been broken or at least forced into major accommodations by concerted action and public outcry. A rapidly expanding concentration of political power in the hands of former President Nixon's executive branch of government was dramatically curtailed under heavy scrutiny by the press in connection with outspoken congressional criticism. The ability of American business to operate without concern for the environmental consequences of pollution or the exhaustion of natural resources has been placed under statutory constraint via the enactment of numerous conservation oriented laws.

The evidence shows, then, that although much power is concentrated in elite circles as Mills has described them, there do appear to be opportunities for the effective operation of counter-balancing structures which have constraining effects on the activities of top-level decision-makers. For example, congressional action, when motivated by a swell of public arousal, can effectively block the progress of special interests promoted by high level leaders in response to pressure from powerful friends and associates. It would appear, therefore, that the power system is somewhat sensitive to those seeking changes, and that advocacy can be a practical way of realizing needed reforms or adjustments.

CHANGING POWER RELATIONSHIPS

Before moving on to consideration of the factors which are important for the successful development of an advocacy movement, it will be useful to look at the processes through which power relationships are changed in greater detail.

Sumner and Killian's (1972) typology of power strategies provides a useful categorization of these approaches. They list three principal strategies: persuasion, bargaining, and coercion.

Persuasion is an approach which involves efforts by advocates of the client population to induce voluntary accommodation or adjustment on the part of persons in power so as to meet the needs of those who are disenfranchised. This can be done by appealing to the consciences or to the sympathies of those in control.

Advocates who pursue a bargaining course seek desired reforms or changes from the power elite by giving this dominant group something which they will value sufficiently to agree to the exchange. For bargaining to be successful as an advocacy strategy, the proponents of change must have something the dominant group wants or needs.

Coercion as a strategy for advocates involves the focusing of direct possibilities of reward or punishment on the controlling group by the plaintiffs in order to force accommodations or major changes. It may involve threats of violence or the eruption of forcible interchanges between opposing groups.

The choice of strategy will depend on the nature of the relationships existing between contending parties. For example, if the advocates are closely identified with the

dominant power structure, persuasion may offer a more attractive alternative than does coercion. The likelihood of a devastating reaction by dominating interests to coercive advocacy measures will also affect the choice of strategies. These and other considerations must be examined by those involved in advocacy activities to insure that their approach is viable. Advocates must be sensitive to the nature of the situation in which they will be acting. They must choose tactics and strategies which are appropriate to those circumstances and they must seek a form of solution which is not incongruent with the situation.

There is no reason why advocacy movements cannot involve two, or even all three of these strategies in some sequential or simultaneous arrangement. A sophisticated advocacy campaign must choose a battery of tactics which will be well suited to the attainment of its ends. This collection of tactics may involve one major power strategy, or a blending of strategies, depending on what would be most appropriate to the circumstances. Ultimately the objective is to reorganize or change conditions so that the power imbalance which has placed some members of society in a subordinate and untenable position relative to those in control can be resolved satisfactorily for those who were outside the decision making process.

ESTABLISHING AN ADVOCACY MOVEMENT

How does an advocacy movement become established and what are the conditions necessary for its success aside from proper selection of power strategies? In this section there have been repeated references to the persons for whom advocacy is being conducted. Common to all such groups is the existence of unmet or unsatisfied needs. They are people who share common problems as a consequence of the way they are treated by society and who either have failed to recognize the causes of their difficulties or have been unable to do anything about them.

This condition of dissatisfaction or need is thus the necessary initial circumstance from which individuals begin to recognize that they have common concerns and that they can improve their lives by exercising the power which is potentially theirs through organized, collective action. The importance of this initial condition of shared need or mutuality of fate has been recognized by many who have studied and observed collective behavior.

In his treatment of the subject, C. Wendell King (1956) explains how this initial condition of individual frustration or discontent can operate as a factor which orients people sharing needs toward a common perspective on their position in society. As they see that their frustrations or their experiences of disenfranchisement from the decision making process are not unique, they can become increasingly tuned-in to their shared circumstances and to the barriers that exclude them from having effective input into the decisions which determine their living conditions and their environmental opportunities. Thus, the fact of shared discontent can foster the development of collective identity within the deprived group.

Once the sense of collective identity has developed, persons living in deprivation can then evolve the second level of awareness that is essential to any advocacy campaign. This second step involves the realization that organized and collective action by group members or others on behalf of their shared interests can generate surprisingly potent forces for change on those who seek to maintain the status quo, and with it, their control over the power structure. Community organizers have long been aware of the crucial role this realization of collective power plays in the development of an organized advocacy campaign. They often employ strategies designed to provide community participants with prompt feedback demonstrating their success in developing control over their environment, and hence, in coming to a realization of their personal competence. The experience of Saul Alinsky's community organizers in Woodlawn, a decaying, minority-dominated community on the Southside of Chicago is a good illustration of the way that a group of people initially lacking any strong sense of shared interest could be united by a sense of political potency into an organized campaign to control the destiny of their community. Organizers identified easily achievable objectives for initial group action. Success in these first ventures produced a tremendous boost in enthusiasm among community members and fueled the growth of much more ambitious advocacy activities (Silberman, 1971).

The elaboration of a sense of group identity into feelings of dedication to the objectives of group activity and commitment to the collective actions taken on behalf of the group is a process resulting in the development of class consciousness. The sequence of steps through which persons

must move in order to reach this state of active involvement has been carefully outlined by Richard S. Morris and Raymond J. Murphy (1969), in the paradigm they have developed for the study of class consciousness. It is not necessary to detail their paradigm here; it is worth noting, however, that they too view the development of group consciousness as an inevitable concomitant of individual dedication to collective action.

Although persons who share common frustrations with the situation in which they find themselves may see clearly that others suffer the same plight as they do, this recognition of shared deprivation is not necessarily sufficient by itself to spur individuals into constructive, goal oriented, collective action. Turner and Killian (1972) point out that persons suffering in poverty or accustomed to long-standing exclusion from effective input into the decision-making system may be so worn down or at such low morale levels that they are unlikely to join spontaneously in collective action. They may become confused and suffer from chronic withdrawal. They may be so preoccupied with finding enough to eat or with having a place to sleep that more abstract considerations about lack of self-determination or about systematic denial of equality in opportunity are outside the range of their interests. Hence some outside precipitating factor may be needed to infuse them with the energy and the vision necessary for mobilization.

When someone emerges who can rally people to the cause and who is able to convince them of the opportunities for creating change and improving their lives, this can be the development which sparks a movement into action. Charismatic leadership has played a central role in the initiation of many advocacy movements. Cesar Chavez serves as a good example of the important role a leader can play at this stage. It was Chavez who convinced the farm workers that his plan for organizing a union and developing a campaign for social reform and human justice in the interest of the Mexican-American people could bring tangible improvements to their sector of society.

Sometimes the spark that causes activity oriented reform to move ahead is not supplied by a particularly charismatic individual, but rather by a significant event. The sudden integration of schools in Riverside, California, following the burning of a local school (Duster, 1971), was such an event. For years the white community had

stubbornly resisted efforts by concerned Black leaders to integrate the schools. Shortly after the Watts riots in Los Angeles, however, a Riverside school was burned. Not long thereafter, an alarmed white power structure initiated the events leading to desegregation of the schools in response to continuing pressure from the Black community.

Whether emergence of leadership or the occurrence of some catalyzing event is responsible, it does seem that advocacy often requires the appearance of some precipitating factor in conjunction with conditions of deprivation or need among a potential client group before persons will make a commitment to action.

It has been noted that as advocacy activities develop, people come to a realization of common interests and acquire a shared dedication to collective goals. The adhesive which joins them together in their collective pursuit of change is often a mutually embraced ideology which offers a set of reasons for the conditions of deprivation which have been experienced by group members. Identification with this social program or doctrine of ideological integration and justification is usually an important step in the evolution of class consciousness. Its importance as a mechanism for developing strategy and working out plans for action should not be underestimated by potential advocates (King, 1956).

All the inspiration in the world among functionaries and the highest levels of charisma in leadership ranks will not insure success for an advocacy movement. Only with efficient organization of responsibilities and well planned coordination of activities can knowledgeable leaders integrate the discreet behaviors of many advocates into effective social action. Once advocacy movements have gotten off the ground, therefore, they need stable leadership which can organize their efforts for maximum effectiveness. Leaders must have a sound grasp of the power structure which is denying the client group its legitimate opportunity to control its own destiny. They must understand how this decision making group operates the economic and political systems which produce outcomes relevant to the lives of those whose interests are being advocated. Furthermore, they must know how to act on these systems to influence those conditions to which decision makers are responsive.

Effective leadership must then design strategies that will hit decision makers where they are vulnerable to outside influence. An ability to identify effective power strategies for

inducing change or accommodation must be matched by a capacity to break down the tasks instrumental to these power strategies and to assign capable and responsible people to their implementation. There must also be a sensitivity to the likely impact on bystander groups who might be drawn into the conflict. Advocacy can be a complicated process requiring skill, experience, sensitivity, and persistence for success. If leadership is not adequate to the task, all the best intentions may lead to misdirected or ineffective actions which do nothing more than expend the energies and enthusiasms of functionaries and friends without constructive results. Indeed, off-the-mark campaigns may only serve to alienate potential supporters through frustration and failure.

Leaders of advocacy campaigns must also be careful not to commit the strategic error of carrying out an advocacy program without allowing direct participation in the process by members of the client group. In many instances, advocacy of this nature has failed because without an opportunity to participate, the client group has not learned the necessary skills, nor have its members developed a sense of their capacity to act effectively on the environment to produce desired outcomes. If this transmission of competence to the client group is not accomplished, the group may become dependent on their advocates and, when these advocates withdraw, their clients may actually be worse off than before (Binstock, 1971).

SUCCESS IN ADVOCACY MOVEMENTS

The discussion to this point has explained how advocacy can be used as an effective strategy for helping the disenfranchised to resolve circumstances in which they are victims of controllers who maintain their hegemony through manipulation of a power imbalance. A brief review of the salient conditions underlying success in advocacy movements will be helpful before moving on to a consideration of their applicability to senior citizens.

In order for an advocacy campaign to begin, there must be an identifiable collection of people within society who share a common sense of dissatisfaction with the way they are living and whose less than satisfactory circumstances are at least in part due to the decisions made by persons in control of the major institutions. When this situation exists, people who share unmet needs and a sense of their inability

to improve conditions can develop a feeling of mutual fate which ties them together.

If this initial state of group awareness and identification develops in conjunction with the emergence of some catalyzing factor, then commitment to action in the interest of collective goals will develop. At this second stage in the evolution of advocacy activities, those in the movement will be aware of their conditions of dissatisfaction and will have embraced an ideology explaining how they have come to be in such circumstances. They will know what aspects of the social structure are responsible for their circumstances, and what general actions must be taken to bring desired changes. With a developed sense of group consciousness, a strong awareness that they share a mutuality of fate, a commonly embraced ideology, and collective commitment to action, the reservoir of potential advocates will exist, complete with the necessary enthusiasm for action.

It is at this point that leadership and organization become so important to the success of advocacy. There must be an intelligent selection of tactics and strategies which will provide effective input into the decision making system so as to produce desired changes. This organizational and coordinative aspect of advocacy is often complex. It requires considerable skill and experience. For those new to this kind of collective activity, it is important that they learn as much as possible from the experiences of others who have pursued advocacy in the past.

The basic steps then are:

1. Promoting collective identification with a cause (generally evolving out of unmet needs);
2. Catalyzing sympathizers into a posture of commitment to action;
3. Understanding the power structure, how it works, who controls it, and what must be done to make it respond to group needs satisfactorily;
4. Successfully implementing necessary action through careful organization and planning plus persistent leadership.

THE ELDERLY AND AN ADVOCACY MOVEMENT

Insofar as the elderly in the United States is a group with unmet needs and an inability to make effective impact on the societal structures shaping the lives of its constituents,

it may be able to benefit from a program of advocacy.

A cursory examination of their circumstances leaves little room for doubt that they are largely a forgotten and disenfranchized segment of society. The breakdown of the extended family together with the advent of numerous mandatory fixed-age retirement policies in business and the public sector have together excluded older adults from their traditional roles, and have denied them opportunities for maintaining their income and sense of productivity. Separated from their families, excluded from productive work endeavors, many of the elderly are forced to live together in undesirable housing at inadequate levels of income in a state of relative isolation from society.

Despite the plentiful evidences of need and disaffection, however, advocacy has not been a technique widely subscribed to by the senior citizens of this country. To a large extent, the elderly themselves do not recognize that they share common problems and needs with their age peers. There are negative stereotypical attitudes held toward the elderly in this society and these are often subscribed to by the seniors themselves. Because of their inability to identify shared interests, their failure to recognize that they share a commonality of fate, the low incidence of group identification among seniors, and the negative images connected with age which are common even today, the task of developing a sense of group identity and cohesiveness among seniors is a difficult one.

Also difficult is the task of instilling seniors with a belief that collective action on their part will be successful in producing desired changes. Many seniors live alone and in poverty. The scars of their rejection from family and work setting cause many to lose faith in their ability to make satisfactory outcomes for themselves. They often lose interest and withdraw from societal activities.

To bring together active and enthusiastic supporters for senior advocacy therefore is not easy. Recruitment among retired professionals may offer some success, but much work will be necessary for raising the collective old age consciousness of seniors and for sensitizing society in general to the needs of this segment of the population.

There are some groups actively pursuing consciousness raising activities now (i.e., the Grey Panthers). Others have organized extensive senior interest groups with considerable lobbying power (i.e., the American Association of Retired

Persons/National Retired Teachers Association). Although they have a long way to go, time is on their side. The number of elderly in America is growing as more people survive into old age and the birthrate continues to fall. The importance of senior interests should continue to grow along with their increasing numbers.

Since the elderly tend to be less healthy and energetic than their younger counterparts, there is a question of their ability to invest enough time and effort in advocacy to make it successful.

It might be useful for the elderly to explore possible alliances with other segments of the population where needs or interests are shared so as to enhance their impact on power structures. For example, employment is a problem for the young as well as for old persons. It might be an issue around which the two groups could join efforts. Poverty is, of course, not confined to elderly persons, hence it might also be an issue around which other groups of poor persons could unite with the elderly.

Coalitions joined together in advocacy for shared goals often operate more successfully when using bargaining as a power strategy than when relying on persuasion or coercion. Turner and Killian (1972) explain that the diverse elements of the coalition are less likely to be driven apart by disagreement over acceptable tactics when bargaining is the avenue taken in seeking change or accommodations. Since bargaining is a strategy well suited to working for change through the political process, the elderly ought to explore as fully as possible the opportunities for trading their votes and their support to politicians who promote their interests in the legislative and executive arenas of government. This is especially an important bargaining chip because of the historically high voter participation rates recorded among the senior segment of the population.

There was a brief mention earlier of the fact that many elderly persons themselves are very accepting of the stereotypes placed upon them by society. When the circumstances are such that the elderly believe the negative things which are the substance of widely circulated popular misconceptions about them, it is very unlikely that they can be mobilized around shared notions of a need for change. If they see their problems as a consequence of their own shortcomings, then it will be difficult for them to place the responsibility for the way things are on inequities of the

system. Rather, they will tend to blame themselves and look on their plight as something they deserve rather than as a condition unjustly placed upon them by the persons who hold central positions of control.

B. F. Skinner (1971) has discussed the issues regarding the determination as to which persons or groups should be making decisions about what society should be like. He says that despite all the allusions to freedom and individual initiative, there are now individuals whose actions have profound effects on the lives of most of us because they are in control of the mechanisms of power which determine the course of this society. His discussion causes one to reflect on how persons outside these central decision-making positions might change their behaviors so as to assume more direct responsibility for their current and future lifestyles by bringing the behavior of such decision makers under their own control. Skinner calls this process of self-determination the development of counter control. Counter control is really what advocacy is all about. If senior citizens, or members of any other group in disaffection because of their position in society are to effectively develop their own counter control, they must come to recognize that the conditions under which they live are not immutable and indeed may very well be the product of exploitative or at least non-responsible manipulation by others. To change their lives and realize their own goals they will have to take measures which make decision-makers accountable and responsive to them. Advocacy is a process which can be helpful in realizing these ends.

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2 power, pluralism, and the aged

Paul A. Kerschner, Ph.D.

William E. Connolly, in his edited work, *The Bias of Pluralism* (1971), provides those of us interested in the subject of power, both its gain and its exercise, with this succinct comment.

> Pluralism has long provided the dominant description and ideal of American politics. As description, it portrays the system as a balance of power among overlapping economic, religious, ethnic and geographical groupings. Each "group" has some voice in shaping socially binding decisions; each constrains and is constrained through the processes of mutual group adjustment; and all major groups share a broad system of beliefs and values which encourages conflict to proceed within established channels and allows initial disagreements to dissolve into compromise solutions.

It is upon this "classic" definition of pluralism that I rest my thesis: for the aged in America pluralism is a suspect and hollow philosophy — promising much and yielding little.

It is fitting that when discussing pluralism, we return to the fount for renewal. The fount in this case is Alexis de Tocqueville. Few men have had his political vision which seems now to span not decades, but centuries. In the case of pluralism, however, he appears to have committed a mistake repeated years later by Karl Marx. Namely, that of looking at the present and predicting only quantitative rather than

qualitative changes to the passage of time. The French philosopher, de Tocqueville, over a century ago, suggested that a viable pluralism encourages among its citizens a wide-spread participation in politics "which originates in the lowest classes . . . and extends successively to all ranks of society" (Connolly, 1971).

I would agree with others that this has not been the case and that origins of activity do not spring from the lower classes but rather from the middle and upper socio-economic groups and in addition, the active participants are but a small minority.

If he were here observing society today, I suggest that de Tocqueville would have to reevaluate his statement and perhaps redirect his definition. Pluralism in this nation, in the 1970s, is no longer recognizable as a number of groups relatively equal in power competing in the public arena for resources, services, power and voice. This book concerns the elderly, but it is obvious that other groups in the society, in addition to the aged, have been competing from unequal power bases.

The concept of pluralism reminds me somewhat of the terrain of a local Los Angeles tourist spot, the La Brea Tar Pits. In order for any constituency to be distinguished from the plethora of groups dotting the flattened earthscape, there must be a bubbling-up which takes place. Once noticed, the equality of bubble heights will determine which groups have their problems addressed or their needs met. I suggest that such a system by definition works only for those who have sufficient *clout* to compete.

"Clout" in this nation is comprised of resources: money, numbers, influential members, perceived importance, determination, and, above all, issues which are singular, crisis-based and agreed upon by a majority of the membership. The pluralists would contend that what is important is not the source of power, but rather its exercise. Power to them, as many political scientists point out, reflects participation in decision-making. I would argue that participation in decision-making is a vehicle only open to those who have been previously legimated by the community as capable of wielding power. This combination of power (overt action) and authority (perceived strength) is what is referred to here as clout.

Issues then arise as to how groups in the society gain this clout, become participants in the policy process and become

fully accredited members of the pluralist system. It has long been argued that the political party system in this country has served as a vehicle whereby interest groups could seek, gain, and exercise power. It is clear, I believe, that in fact, interest group "parties" have for the most part failed in America. Certainly they have failed on the national level, and they have met with only limited success on the local or state level (e.g., Farm Labor Party). The two major parties have not, many would contend, served as fertile ground in which the seeds of interest groups could live and flourish. Indeed, entry into the big "2" of the political process by groups which are not perceived as "visible" is akin to a new automobile company breaking into the big "3." It is important that we determine why the pluralistic model is *of limited value* to many fledgling groups in the society, identify *what it takes to compete*, and finally address the issue of *advocacy for the aged* in light of these findings.

1. **Of Limited Value** — The difficulty which arises when interest groups attempt to enter the pluralistic arena revolves around the limited nature of the interest issue(s). Almost by definition, the group which is seeking entry is: (a) a minority of the population, and (b) has seized upon the problem which is capable of being handled, e.g., most likely limited and single-purposed. Thus, in Scandinavia, parties which formed around the issue of old-age pensions, briefly flourished but soon declined due to the narrowness of scope and the limited number of interested members.

Pluralism is of limited value to many groups because it assumes that the issues to be addressed appeal with equal passion to all members of the interest group and that excitement can continue to be generated over time. Certainly Cesar Chavez could comment on the United Farm Workers' experience wherein these two elements, equality of appeal and commitment over time, have apparently run into serious difficulty. Prolonged commitment, if maintained has an additional effect on the pluralistic process — it provides the human and financial resources which allow participation. Dr. Hobart A. Jackson, in his chapter, touches on the recent ability of Black America to enter the pluralistic market place due to the commitment present and the subsequent flow of resources, money, time, and people. Few groups, however, can command this type of resource.

2. **What it takes to compete** — Perhaps the one element which must be present is a vast energy source within the

group. We are speaking literally here when referring to energy. Does the group have the capability within its ranks to carry on a long-term arduous battle within the system among other powerful groups competing for resources? Does Ms. Kuhn, Convener of the Gray Panthers, anticipate this problem when she speaks of aged and youth in action?

Second only to energy is the need for the membership to identify heavily with the goals and values of the group. Without what Eric Hoffer calls the *true believer* syndrome, it is difficult to sustain interest and excitement over time. One of the problems has been that when advocacy groups move beyond their own interest-specific issues, they lose the "true believers" and begin to disintegrate. How then, it might be asked, have our political parties survived for are they not non-ideologically based? I think here the answer is that they are in the "power-broker" business, able to dispense or withhold rewards. Could then an interest group become a political party? In theory, certainly so, but in reality the party identification is so strong that little short of major societal upheaval would bring about this situation.

We must keep in mind that the boundaries between interest group and political party are not as amenable to passage as one might think. Gabriel Almond in his book, *The Politics of Developing Areas* (1960), colorfully describes the arena of societal rippling and moves into the political policy-system: "the murmurs and complaints in the bazaar in Baghdad" are not in the political system until — "a leader disguised as a water bearer overhears the murmurs and translates them into political claims." As the diffuse and inarticulate murmur is translated into a claim on the use of public authority, it passes the boundary and enters the political system as an act of "interest articulation." Thus, it takes the following elements to compete: *energy, commitment, crisis and crisis leadership.*

Let us now turn to the role of advocacy and the aged in the pluralistic process. It is important to spell out some of the delimitations or perhaps anomalies which make this particular group somewhat unique.

1. Of all interest, minority and advocacy groups in the society, the aged is the only one we all "join," barring death. Even with affirmative action, we don't become black, brown, red, male or female. We do become old.
2. Upon becoming aged, we don't lose other affili-

ations, we don't change color, alter the pitch of our voices, or forget our native tongue.

3. The aged, if we use the traditional figure of 65+, have as an aggregate less physical energy than groups comprised of youth or early adulthood.
4. The boundary definition by which one enters the aged enclave is extremely fuzzy; there is little doubt as to boundaries with other minorities.

Given these kinds of intervening variables, what about advocacy and the aged? We wish to set out some propositions which we are currently exploring. They are not definitive, may be open to interpretation and do not represent closure on the subject. They are, however, issues which we believe require thought and analysis if we are to understand the phenomenon of aging and advocacy.

PROPOSITIONS

1. Older adults may identify with characteristics and values other than age: e.g., a 70 year old Indian woman may be an Indian first, a woman second, and perhaps aged last.
2. If aging groups identify issues of major political and public policy implication, the issues and perhaps the groups will be co-opted by one or both of the major parties, e.g., Medicare or Nutrition.
3. The major result of aging advocacy has been to serve as a consciousness-raising mechanism for the general population or other aged, e.g., Grey Panthers.
4. The older population does not have the physical energy to duplicate the advocacy behavior of other interest groups, e.g., the field picketing of the United Farm Workers.
5. The aging advocacy groups have not succeeded in aligning themselves with non-aged interest or minority groups, e.g., Schattschneider's semi-sovereign peoples idea — where alignment with others produces a powerful (numbers) force.
6. The differences among people may increase with age, they do not become more homogeneous.
7. Aged advocates will find it increasingly difficult to mobilize people around issues which are not clearly age specific, e.g., Defense spending — Farm subsidies.

8. The aged population has difficulty in accepting and pushing their status as deprived minorities, e.g., there is not an Association for the Advancement of Older People. Rather we have the Grey Panthers.
9. The aged advocate groups cannot demonstrate that they can deliver bloc votes on age related issues — medicare — housing — transportation or even older candidates.
10. The field of advocacy and the aged is following patterns similar to other movements, e.g., AARP/NRTA, NCSC — Grey Panthers — Status of Women Committees — NOW —

We have attempted to identify ten major issues or propositions which are important for the reader, but even more important to the advocates themselves. We cannot afford to ignore the potential impact the answers to these questions might have upon the aged.

One last point we might wish to consider is whether advocacy groups for the aged will and should eventually be comprised and staffed by the aged to the exclusion of the non-aged. In some ways the NAACP moved in this direction from any early domination by the white middle-class to a predominately Black leadership.

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Resources for Senior Advocacy: Political Behavior and Partisan Flexibility*

3

Neal E. Cutler, Ph.D.

As is clear from the various chapters in this volume, "advocacy" on behalf of the older population in the United States can take on a variety of meanings and a variety of forms. Some consider advocacy in the context of governmental agencies that speak for the older citizen within the government itself — such as the role of the Administration on Aging in marshalling other federal programs and resources (e.g., in transportation, housing, medical benefits) to benefit the elderly. Others focus on the public advocacy of the rights of older citizens through specialized groups of lawyers and legal services which are established to present the position of the older citizen in matters of formal legal procedures. Still others focus on the role which national and local organizations of the elderly play in presenting the position of older persons and retired persons to agencies of government and to the public at large.

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The present chapter proposed to add yet another dimension to senior advocacy — that of the resources for policy advocacy that are inherent in patterns of electoral political behavior. Although governmental bureaucracies, legal services agencies, and private voluntary organizations all play vital and visible roles in publicly presenting the needs and demands of the older citizen, it is important not to forget the resources which are represented by older citizens themselves — through the constitutionally regularized election of national, state, and local leaders and representatives.

Much has been presented in the mass media in recent years about the growing number of older persons and the possibility that the older population may influence politics. Some of what is written in the public press is myth and some is based on a realistic appraisal of known trends and factors in American society and politics. The thesis underlying this chapter, consequently, is threefold: first, that advocacy is a political process; second, that aging and the age factor represent an increasingly important aspect of American politics; and third, that the "partisan flexibility" of the older voter represents a political resource for senior advocacy. We will briefly review the first two of these points, and then present the results of an ongoing research project which is examining partisan flexibility in the United States.

SENIOR ADVOCACY AND THE POLITICS OF AGE

The goal of senior advocacy is the production and execution of social policies which benefit the older population. Social policy is not always a matter of *public* policy, in that private institutions engage in practices which affect the welfare of older persons. Nonetheless, public policies provide the dominant context in which both public and private agencies and institutions deal with individuals. Furthermore, public policy represents the outcome of the dynamics of politics. Social policy may be medical, social, or economic in character; ultimately, however, societal decisions concerning the allocation of valued resources — whether these be dollars, access points, or statuses — are political in nature. Decisions concerning the financing of the Social Security system, for example, may in the first instance be financial in nature, but are, ultimately, political decisions.

The present chapter, therefore, conceptualizes senior advocacy as a matter for political analysis, and the question is

one of political resources which may enhance the processes of senior advocacy. In considering the electoral behavior of the older population in the United States, we must recognize that partisan flexibility is but one of several factors relevant to the politics of old age. It is important, therefore, to have a brief overview of these other factors which describe the context of old age politics in the United States between now and the beginning of the next century. Indeed, it is within the general political context of the politics of age that the partisan flexibility of older members of the political system takes on particular meaning.

Demographic Factors. Perhaps the most salient variable in understanding the growing importance of age and older persons in American politics are the facts of population numbers. Although it is often mistakenly thought that the explosion of the older population has been brought about by greater longevity of individuals, in fact demographers have learned that increases in old-age longevity are not particularly important as far as the projected growth in the numbers of older persons is concerned — at least between now and the turn of the century. The key demographic factor is that of past rates of fertility. The increased fertility of the 1940s, known as the "Baby Boom," will result in a "Gerontology Boom" in the first decades of the next century, as the survivors of the Baby Boom reach age 65 and older. There were some 20 million persons over the age of 65 reported in the 1970 census, and it is projected that there will be approximately 29 million persons over age 65 by the year 2000. (Such projections are not difficult to make since all persons who will be age 65 in the year 2000 have already been born!)

The political context of aging, however, is not described only by the growing number of older persons. While there was a Baby Boom in the 1940s, the 1970s have been characterized by a very low birth rate. Consequently, at the turn of the century there will be an increased proportion of the population eligible to receive social and economic benefits, but at the same time a decreasing proportion of the population that will be in the working years (e.g., age 18 to age 64), will be called upon to pay the bills. Thus, the ratio of older to working population will be greater in future years. And this situation can change even more dramatically if current trends in retirement patterns continue and "old age"

comes at a lower age, such as age 60 or even age 55 (as is already the practice in some sectors of the labor force). In short, demographic pressures may create economic problems, problems which are, ultimately, issues for political debate and decision.

Political Participation. There have been some studies in social gerontology which suggest that people "disengage" from social activity as they enter old age. More recent studies, however, have begun to dispel this image of the aging; of particular relevance here, however, are several studies which clearly demonstrate that, in the aggregate, older persons do not disengage from political participation as a consequence of the aging process. Studies of voter turnout rates, for example, have shown that people in their sixties have somewhat lower voting rates than younger age groups. When the turnout statistics are more refined in terms of such characteristics as education and sex, however, it is clear that age per se is not what accounts for the lower rate of voting. For example, the current population of older persons represents a generation which did not have access to universal public education as current generations of younger persons have had. Similarly, since the processes of mortality are clearly sex-linked, the older population groups include more females than males. Consequently, to the degree that education and sex are related to voting — and many studies have demonstrated that females and less educated persons vote less — then the aged might appear to vote less. Such differences are likely to become smaller, however, as current generations of younger well-educated persons age, and as the cultural norms against female political participation vanish. Indeed, one study which statistically eliminated the artifacts of such differences discovered that age is sometimes correlated with increased voting behavior.

Similar studies, based upon interviews with national samples of the American electorate, have also demonstrated the lack of any political disengagement connected to the aging process. Measures of the awareness of political issues and controversies, as well as measures of the self-reported political interest of adults have clearly shown that these forms of involvement in political affairs remained relatively unchanged at least through the sixth decade of the life cycle. In short, there is ample evidence that levels of political behavior of both current and future generations of older

persons are likely to be substantially unaffected by the onset of old age.

Political Organization. One of the most important elements of the political context of senior advocacy is that of organization, and specifically, organizations whose goal is the representation of the interests of older persons in various public forums and before governmental agencies. In the past it has been the case that age-based organizations failed to have long-lasting political impact. In part this may have been due to the difficulty of funding an organization solely from the contributions of the elderly, and partly due to the personalistic leadership in some of these organizations. In a recent analysis of age-based voluntary associations, however, Professor Henry Pratt has argued that modern organizations have overcome many of these prior problems. For example, two of the largest senior advocacy organizations — the combined National Retired Teachers Association — American Association of Retired Persons and the National Council of Senior Citizens — are each organizationally related to other kinds of institutions (e.g., an insurance company and a labor federation) such that resources for the senior advocacy organizations do not have to rely only on membership contributions.

At the same time, contemporary age-based associations have evolved modern organizationally-structured leadership patterns so that the associations' efforts are not dependent upon the energies of a single well-known leader. In addition, Professor Pratt's analysis demonstrates that the interests of modern senior advocate organizations have diversified sets of policy goals, so that the enactment of a new program or law does not eliminate the organization's justification for participating in the political process. At the same time, these organizations serve more than just policy needs; that is, they provide a number of personal benefits (e.g., retirement planning, leisure time activities, etc.) for the older members, so that a diverse membership can be attracted to the organization. In short, modern age-based organizations appear to have the potential for substantial impact in the political processes on behalf of the older population, and at the same time have the kinds of human and financial resources which guarantee the long-term activity and effectiveness of the organization.

PARTISAN FLEXIBILITY AND ELECTORAL BEHAVIOR

The factors summarized above may be thought of as pieces of a large jigsaw puzzle which, upon completion, will portray the degree to which age factors are likely to influence the shape and direction of American politics over the next two or three decades. Thus far the emerging picture suggests that age is becoming increasingly important. The question of partisan flexibility, and the more general issue of the contribution of old age political behavior to senior advocacy, is an important piece of this puzzle which is just beginning to be researched by social gerontologists.

There is, among observers of old age politics, a difference of opinion concerning the actual or potential political power which older persons can exert on their own behalf. This chapter takes the position that advocates of senior power (or more modestly, "senior influence") are increasingly developing resources by which that power or influence can be effectively wielded in public political contexts. This is not to say that all of American politics by the year 2000 will be dominated by the single issue of old age. Rather, the elderly will have the population numbers and political resources to have an impact upon policy choices.

Contrary to this position is the view that the older population in the United States does not now have, and will not have in the forseeable future, sufficient political power to have an impact upon the shape of political affairs and public policy. Professor Robert Binstock, for example, has written that older persons do not have sufficient population to influence the outcome of national elections; that is, even though persons over age 65 will constitute about 17% of the electorate by the year 2000, these older voters will never constitute a homogeneous voting bloc. Furthermore, Professor Binstock argues, the older population in the United States does not have much political influence through the mechanism of interest groups and voluntary associations, and are not likely to enhance such organizationally-based influence in the next two or three decades. Professor Binstock does believe that the social and economic status of the aged in American society will benefit from political changes; it is just that whatever benefits accrue to the elderly will be the result of general ideological tendencies in the political system and not the result of "senior power."

Most observers would agree with at least part of the above assessment — the older population is unlikely to evolve

into a single-minded homogeneous voting bloc which rigidly responds to all political choices in terms of the single issue of old age. To the contrary, research has demonstrated that older persons are likely to remain identified with the ethnic, religious, racial, social, and political groups and symbols that have served as political reference points throughout the life cycle. Indeed, as will be demonstrated below, the research concerning partisan flexibility suggests that persons do not naturally or automatically become politically rigid as they become older.

But to argue that because older persons do not vote as a single monolithic bloc they consequently do not and will not have political influence, is not a convincing argument. As was suggested above, the voting behavior of the older population is only one of the resources which senior advocates can draw upon. Few political decisions and policy choices are directly made through the election of candidates; it is what those elected representatives and leaders do in legislatures and executive offices that result in policy. Nonetheless, elections are the mechanisms by which orderly transfers of power and changes of leadership do take place in our system of representative democracy, and thus influence the direction and shape of public policy. Consequently, this source of political influence must not be dismissed.

Partisanship in American Politics. In the context of the American electoral system, what is "partisan flexibility"? It is well known that most elections are organized as partisan contests, typically Republicans versus Democrats, although other parties have arisen from time to time. Most members of the American political system, those who vote or take a more active political stance, come to develop some kind of partisan preference or identification. It should be quickly noted — as documented in the classic study *The American Voter* — that there are substantial variations within the electorate as to the strength of these partisan attachments. Some individuals may be very strong Democrats or Republicans, while others may be basically Independents who vaguely lean toward one party or the other.

In addition, trends in partisanship occur. For example, two recent research projects — a trend study of generational change in American politics and a national longitudinal study of high school seniors and their parents — have concluded that the more recent generations are much less partisan than

are the generational groups who are currently senior citizens.

Not only are there variations in the strength of partisan identifications, but there are variations in the kinds of actual political behavior which result from the attitude of partisanship. Democratic identifiers may or may not vote for the Democratic candidate for President or for Congress. Republican identifiers may or may not vote a straight Republican ticket at the local level. Additionally, particular issues and candidate personalities enter into individual voting decisions, such that across two elections a Democratic identifier may vote with his party in one election but against that party in the second.

Thus, political analysts know that partisan attachments vary in their intensity over time and, more importantly, vary in their behavioral outcomes. If such variations did not exist — if all people who express a Democratic partisan identification always vote for Democratic candidates — then elections would be simple to predict: over the past forty years or so Democrats have continuously been the national majority party as far as the attitude of partisanship is concerned. Obviously, individuals do not always vote their attitudinal preferences.

The Measurement and Meaning of Partisan Flexibility. With this brief background, we may turn directly to the issue of partisan flexibility, and patterns of partisan flexibility which may be associated with age. Partisan flexibility may be defined as the propensity of an individual to vote in such a way that (a) the choices made from among available candidates do not necessarily endorse the individual's own attitudinally-expressed partisan feelings, or (b) the votes are not always cast for candidates representing the same political party. Partisan flexibility among the older electorate is important for two basic reasons. First, to the degree that the voting behavior of older persons is not irrevocably tied to partisan identifications, the individual will be able to respond to a wide variety of political stimuli, the most important being candidates' positions on issues of particular relevance to the older citizen. Second, if politicians perceive that the political behavior of older persons is not inextricably tied to partisan identifications, then they may be more responsive, in a policy sense, to the needs of the older population.

The converse of the second point is important: if politicians perceive the older person to be more rigid than

other sectors of the electorate, then they might be less responsive to the needs of older voters. One of the societal stereotypes of the aging process is that people become more rigid as they enter old age. There is some gerontological research to support this proposition for some kinds of psychological variables, although social gerontologists have not undertaken studies of political attitudes and behavior in this regard. Political scientists, however, in studies of both the American voter and the British voter, have noted that older persons tend to have stronger senses of party identification than younger persons. Although further research has demonstrated that it is not aging per se which accounts for age-related patterns of partisan strength, such research has tended to reinforce the stereotype of old age inflexibility in the domain of politics.

In order to directly test age patterns of partisan flexibility, a set of public opinion and political attitude surveys were acquired, each of which represented a national sample of the American electorate taken during a presidential election campaign. Each of the surveys included a set of questions concerning partisan attitudes and voting behavior which could be used to measure partisan flexibility. Five different measures of partisan flexibility were constructed as follows:

1. partisan affiliation of the voter compared to voter's partisan choice for president (partisan flexibility = affiliation different from presidential choice)

2. party of presidential vote in current election compared to party of presidential vote in previous election (partisan flexibility = voter's choice of different parties in two successive elections)

3. party of presidential vote compared to party of congressional vote (partisan flexibility = voter's choice of different parties)

4. straight-ticket voting versus split-ticket voting for local and state elected officials (partisan flexibility = split-ticket voting)

5. partisan preference for president expressed in pre-election interview as compared to actual presidential vote expressed in post-election interview (partisan flexibility = change of presidential vote choice)

The basic research hypothesis suggested by the stereotypical view of aging suggested above is that, using these five

measures, older persons are less flexible (or more rigid) in matters of partisanship and political behavior than younger members of the electorate. Before reporting the data which tests this hypothesis, however, one important point should be noted: A test of this hypothesis should not be limited to public opinion data representing a single election campaign.

Generational studies of patterns of partisan affiliations have revealed that the current generation of older persons was born and raised in a predominantly Republican period of history, and are thus to this day more Republican than more recent generational groups. Given the generational Republicanism of contemporary older persons, it would be unwise to test the research hypothesis only, for example, in 1972, when there was a Republican landslide. If the test were made only in 1972 when all groups in the electorate chose to vote heavily Republican, then a group (such as older persons) which was heavily Republican in partisan attitude would include few people whose voting behavior crossed party lines. In a word, because of the differences in the partisan environments of various elections, the partisan flexibility hypothesis should be tested using data from different kinds of elections.

Consequently, our analysis of partisan flexibility will compare the 1964 and the 1972 elections because while the campaigns and outcomes were "structurally" similar, the partisan results were in opposing directions. That is, in both campaigns the incumbent president faced an opponent from the other party who was generally perceived to be an "extreme" candidate — and in both situations the incumbent received a landslide victory. Yet the partisan results were quite different in that 1964 saw a Democratic landslide while 1972 saw a Republican landslide. Thus, any generationally-based Republicanism within the current generation of older citizens can be tested in quite different partisan environments. Furthermore, to extend the comparative basis of this analysis, we also include data for the 1968 election, since — unlike 1964 and 1972 — this was an election which was contested by two candidates in the middle of the political spectrum, neither of whom was the presidential incumbent, and which resulted in a narrow rather than a landslide victory.

Tables 1, 2, and 3 present the data on the five measures of partisan flexibility for the 1964, 1968, and 1972 presidential elections. The percentages are as interesting for

how they describe the American political system in general, as for what is learned about age patterns in partisan flexibility. It is obvious, for example, that the 1972 election was substantially different from the other elections, as the total amount of partisan flexibility was greater in just about every category. The fact, for example, that nearly one-third of the voters changed their minds from the pre-election interview to the post-election interview (more than three times the typical rate for this variable) demonstrates quite clearly that the available candidate and issue choices stimulated many voters to vote differently than they had in the past, and at odds with their usual partisan preferences.

The relative uniqueness of the 1972 election results also verifies the statement made earlier that the analysis of partisanship should include more than a single election, since any one election may be quite atypical of national elections in general. This is particularly germane to the pattern of age differences in the first partisan flexibility measure (the difference between the voter's party preference and the party of the voter's presidential choice). The age difference between young and old for this measure in 1972 is the largest in all of the percentages presented here, and if only 1972 were observed it might appear as if age does bring about substantial decreases in partisan flexibility. Yet it must be recalled that the older voters in these samples represent the survivors of a heavily Republican generation, as well as a generation which was raised in more intensely partisan times. Consequently, when this heavily Republican generation confronted the heavily Republican electoral context of 1972, the result was a low level of "switching" — which in the terms of this chapter is a low level of partisan flexibility.

More important than any single election, or even any single measure of partisan flexibility, however, is the general pattern revealed by these three elections. For most of the five measures across all three elections the older voters are not substantially less flexible in their partisan behavior than the rest of the electorate. It is even the case in some instances that the oldest age group exhibits greater partisan flexibility than some of the younger age groups. Indeed, for most of the measures in the three elections, voters in their sixties and seventies are very similar to the total electorate. Furthermore, it should be kept in mind that these data are based upon random samples of the total electorate, and that even in the best of such samples, differences of three or four

percentage points may be due to sampling error, and thus should not have a significant impact on our interpretations.

There are a few notable age differences, however, which deserve specific comment. The votes cast by the oldest age group for local and state elections, for example, exhibit less ticket-splitting than is the case for the younger age groups. A number of factors other than "psychological rigidity" could account for such a pattern. As mentioned above, the older voters represent a generation raised in a more partisan era, and hence may find it more difficult to divide their votes among Republicans and Democrats. Alternatively, voters in their seventies may find national politics — the arena in which Social Security and Medicare programs are debated — a more important focus of their physical and intellectual energies, and thereby be more likely to vote for local and state candidates on a purely partisan basis.

In 1968, as another example, the oldest age group again had a lower percentage on the first partisan flexibility measure. It should be recalled that in 1968 a third party, the American Independent Party, captured a relatively large proportion (in terms of third parties) of the popular vote. Although further research would be required to validate the best explanation, it may be that the older voters were less inclined than the other age groups to vote for other than the two major parties.

Aside from these specific examples of lower levels of partisan flexibility within the 70+ age group, in general it should be concluded that the older voters are not characterized by less partisan flexibility than the rest of the electorate. Furthermore, while much of our commentary has focused upon the 70+ age group, it should be noted that the 60-69 age group reflects, in most instances, in the general levels of partisan flexibility of the total electorate. Despite this general conclusion suggested by the data from three elections, we should mention that the information presented here is only an introduction to the kinds of analysis that need to be undertaken. For example, the data in these three tables do not identify the difference in the sex, educational, or social class composition of the different age groups — characteristics which may be related to partisan flexibility, and whose analysis would substantially help to make this kind of research more precise. Furthermore, future research should look at samples of specific generational groups in order to see if the aging of these groups produces changes in patterns of

partisan flexibility. Indeed, while the research presented here has provided several interesting pieces of information, the present discussion should be considered as only an introduction to a more systematic analysis.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The research reported here does not support the hypothesis that older persons are systematically and significantly less flexible in their partisan political behavior than younger members of the political system. Consequently, it should not be expected that all older persons vote according to their partisan attitudes in great numbers simply because they are old (or "rigid"). As a resource for senior advocacy, the partisan flexibility of older persons is important, because it can be expected that substantial numbers of older voters will support candidates whose policy positions represent the perceived needs and desires of older persons. Furthermore, as noted earlier, as politicians come to recognize that older persons are not significantly different from younger voters in terms of partisan flexibility, then policy considerations rather than partisan considerations will become increasingly more important.

In concluding this chapter, it should be emphasized that advocacy on behalf of older persons, within the context of political behavior, does not rest solely on the issue of partisan flexibility. As noted above, there are many pieces to the jigsaw puzzle of old age politics in the United States. A number of research projects, several of which are noted in the bibliography appended to this chapter, have examined different pieces of this puzzle: the demography of aging; the political participation, political interest, and political awareness of the aged; generational trends in political behavior; factors of political organization. The data on partisan flexibility represent an additional piece of the puzzle.

Like the earlier research projects, the research reported here suggests that the aged do have political resources with potential political power and influence. It should not be expected that all older persons will think and behave politically with a single mind; it should be expected that, in the aggregate, older members of the political system respond to the policy appeals of specific candidates, and are not prisoners of their life-long partisan attachments. Further, although voting behavior is but one of several kinds of

political behavior, when the evidence of partisan flexibility within the older population is added to the other factors which have been researched, it becomes clear that the aged, now and increasingly so in the remaining years of this century, have the political resources for the consideration of problems and the advocacy of solutions on their own behalf. In short, while a broad range of social and political institutions may take responsibility for advocating programs and policies for the older population, the elderly themselves have substantial political resources for their own senior advocacy of problems and solutions to those problems.

TABLE 1: PARTISAN FLEXIBILITY IN 1964*

Age Group	(1) partisanship vs. pres. vote	(2) current pres. vote vs. past pres. vote	(3) pres. vote vs. cong. vote	(4) straight- vs. split-ticket vote	(5) pre-vote vs. post-vote
21-29	23	24	20	56	6
30-39	15	22	16	44	6
40-49	16	17	16	41	7
50-59	15	17	16	37	2
60-69	21	18	11	35	5
70+	13	16	6	20	3
TOTAL	17	19	15	40	5

*In each case, the number reported represents the percentage of each age group which exhibited the flexible response, i.e., (1) the percent whose partisanship and vote for president represent different parties; (2) the percent who voted for candidates of different parties in the present and the previous presidential elections; (3) the percent who voted for candidates of different parties for president and congress; (4) the percent who voted a split-ticket; (5) the percent who changed preference from the pre-election interview to the post-election interview.

The data were made available by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research through the Political and Social Data Laboratory of the University of Southern California.

TABLE 2: PARTISAN FLEXIBILITY IN 1968*

Age Group	(1) partisanship vs. pres. vote	(2) current pres. vote vs. past pres. vote	(3) pres. vote vs. cong. vote	(4) straight- vs. split-ticket vote	(5) pre-vote vs. post-vote
21-29	49	26	30	58	11
30-39	38	25	15	57	11
40-49	42	25	18	52	7
50-59	34	24	15	40	7
60-69	36	25	16	42	6
70+	27	19	18	31	10
TOTAL	39	24	18	48	8

*See note for Table 1.

TABLE 3: PARTISAN FLEXIBILITY IN 1972*

Age Group	(1) partisanship vs. pres. vote	(2) current pres. vote vs. past pres. vote	(3) pres. vote vs. cong.vote	(4) straight- vs. split-ticket vote	(5) pre-vote vs. post-vote
21-29	47	78	72	59	44
30-39	45	78	73	63	29
40-49	34	81	69	62	32
50-59	28	80	66	61	28
60-69	26	89	72	52	21
70+	21	79	75	40	27
TOTAL	35	81	70	57	31

*See note for Table 1.

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Interorganizational Issues and Advocacy for the Elderly 4

Stephen McConnell

Ours is an organizational society. Increasingly, organizations are the primary actors representing the interests of sub-populations in political activities within American society. Organizations, more so than individuals, are capable of performing numerous roles and of mobilizing large and diverse resources for the purposes of influencing societal processes. Advocacy for the elderly is no exception to this. Organizations at the national, state and local levels are of central importance in the drive to improve the quality of life for the aged through lobbying, competing for public and private funds and services, providing media presentations which generate a more positive and accurate image of our elderly populations, and so forth.

However, seldom is an organization capable of achieving its goals without taking into consideration other organizations. There are reasons for this: Organizations have limited resources, a condition which forces them to obtain needed resources from other organizations. Yet, drawing on outside resources reduces the organization's autonomy. Since organizations prefer autonomy (in order to set their own goals and prescribe means for achieving those goals) they will only engage in interaction with other organizations if resource needs cannot be met from within. The result is a strong hesitancy on the part of organizations to engage in any form of interorganizational activity beyond that which is immediately necessary for achieving specific goals.

The dual problem of organizational *interdependence* and desire for *autonomy* is especially critical among advocate organizations of the elderly. On the one hand, the relative newness and lack of experience of many advocate organizations places them in a position of low power and forces interaction and coalition-formation with other more powerful and prestigous organizations. However, because advocate organizations do not wish to lose autonomy, interaction and cooperation with outside organizations is not always desirable. That is, advocate organizations capable of forming many coalitions, a condition which enhances their power, may end up sacrificing many important goals in order to gain this power. Obviously, some balance of interorganizational cooperation and organizational autonomy is necessary in order to maximize power and minimize the dilution of goals.

The above discussion has pointed out briefly the assets and liabilities of engaging in interorganizational cooperation. In essence, the level of commitment to the value of interorganizational commitment and a scale has been interaction or cooperation among organizations. Recently, sociological research has focused on this problem of interorganizational commitment and a scale has been developed indicating a "rough progression" of interorganizational activities. This scale is shown in Table I. The scale provides a framework by which advocate organizations might evaluate current and planned interorganizational activity. It not only describes types of interaction, but also indicates the stages necessary for facilitating interorganizational cooperation. The occurrence of any particular stage requires a greater degree of interorganizational commitment than the prior stage.

A more useful tool for the development of interorganizational advocacy might be a statement of the requisite elements for *planning* interorganizational activities. Table II lists ten important stages for the planning of interorganizational cooperation. Briefly, planning begins with a definition of the issue or field and a specification of the relevant organizations which might be mobilized around that issue (stages 1-3). Next, is a determination of the level of commitment of organizations to the issue and the potentials for interorganizational cooperation (stages 4-7), followed by agreement on the objectives and procedures for cooperation (stages 8-9). The final stage (stage 10) is perhaps the most important. It involves the commitment of resources toward

TABLE I

*Scale of Interorganizational Cooperation**

Low intensity/commitment

1. Director (leader) acquaintance
2. Director (leader) interaction
3. Information exchange
4. Resource exchange (e.g., shared personnel, facilities, funds)
5. Overlapping directors
6. Written agreements, joint programs, or coalitions

High intensity/commitment

*With minor changes this scale is a replica of that developed by David L. Rogers, "Towards a Scale of Interorganizational Relations Among Public Agencies", *Sociology and Social Research*, 59, #1 (1974): 61-70.

TABLE II

*Planning Stages for Interorganizational Cooperation***

Planning Stage

1. *Definition of the interorganizational field:* At any given time there are many interorganizational fields or opportunities for cooperative interaction between organizations. The focal interorganizational field is usually created as a proposed strategy for the resolution of problems requiring the involvement of two or more organizations. Examples: elderly, income, health, etc.
2. *Establishment of territorial orientation:* It is necessary to determine the spatial boundaries of inter-organizational relations. For example, will efforts

involve local, state, regional, national or international organizations?

3. *Identification of relevant organizations for inclusion in the field:* Organizations which are included will usually have, 1) some commitment to the specific issue at hand, and 2) a potential resource base.

4. *Determination of intraorganizational commitment:* This is an evaluation of how committed in terms of resource allocation each of the relevant organizations are to the focal field.

5. *Determination of interorganizational commitment:* That is, how committed are the organizations to working together rather than alone and independently.

6. *Determination of domain consensus within the interorganizational field:* Domain consensus establishes a set of expectations about what the organizations will or will not do.

7. *Determination of benefits and costs of interorganizational cooperation:* This is necessary since organizations are in a state of partial conflict (i.e., interdependent and autonomous).

8. *Acceptance of interorganizational objectives:* It is important that organizations accept a common definition of the problem in order for interorganizational cooperation to occur.

9. *Acceptance or agreement on procedures for implementing interorganizational objectives:* In this stage organizations accept or agree upon the type of structure needed to implement the interorganizational objectives.

10. *Allocation of resources for implementation of interorganizational objectives:* Without the commitment of resources interorganizational cooperation remains at a low level.

**Adopted (often paraphrased) from: Gerald Klonglan, et al., "The nature of interorganizational relations" in *Voluntary Action Research*, (chapt. 12); edited by David H. Smith. Lexington Books, 1973.

interorganizational cooperation, a necessary step for high level interorganizational activity (such as coalition-formation or joint programs).

In sum, while organizations are capable of diversified activities they are limited by an inherent shortage of resources which forces some degree of interaction with outside organizations. However, due to the importance of autonomy, organizations opt for the least amount of interorganizational activity since this activity results in reduced organizational autonomy. The greater the intensity of interorganizational cooperation, ranging from mere awareness of other organizations to coalition-formation, the greater is the commitment to interorganizational activity and the greater is the loss of organizational autonomy. Finally, the planning stages of interorganizational cooperation begin with a definition of the focal field and relevant organizations within that field, include clarification of levels of commitment and agreement on objectives and procedures, and end with the commitment of resources to interorganizational activity.

5 consumer participation

Dorothy Fleisher

Consumer participation in program planning and administration is seen as a means of registering consumer values, promoting consumer needs, and protecting consumer interests, as well as becoming an instrument in making allocative judgments. Thus, participation may be instrumental in enabling social programs to provide "... what consumers actually want and need and may provide a feedback mechanism for consumers to indicate whether program output is actually meeting these wants and needs" (Fauri, 1973, p.2).

The Concept of Participation

The term participation is used to describe various sets of activities and roles. Consumer participation "virtually defies generalization and delights in reducing abstractions to dust . . ." (Spiegel, 1971, p.4). Thus, in this section, to create a common frame of reference, the terms participation and consumer will be defined; the goals and objectives of participation will be enumerated; alternative forms of participation will be discussed; and advantages and disadvantages of participation will be summarized.

Participation is an ideal, an integral part of the American cultural heritage. Although much has been written about participation, the term is used to convey different

meanings, and it is only recently that theoreticians have begun to define and test this concept (Kramer and Specht, 1975, p.4).

Participation: A Definition

Participation "refers to the means by which people who are not elected or appointed officers of agencies and of government influence decisions about programs and policies which affect their lives" (Brager and Specht, 1973, p.34).

The Consumer Participant

The term consumer, although not always distinguished from citizen in the literature, refers to a more specific group of persons. The term consumer can be defined as a person who is a member of a specific population to be served. The consumer is assumed to have a more direct interest in the program than the citizen-at-large.

Goals of Participation

The literature identifies the following goals of participation: to reduce alienation, anomie, apathy and helplessness; to educate and socialize by affording consumers, through the process of participation, the opportunity to gain practice in democratic skills and procedures; to increase consumers' feelings of political efficacy, trust and confidence in public officials; to provide consumers with an opportunity to influence decisions that affect them.

Specific objectives for consumer involvement in institutional decision making have been summarized by Yin as follows: to increase the flow of information between servers and served by improving communication; to improve service officials' attitudes so that they are more sensitive to consumer needs; to improve consumer attitudes so they have a more positive view of services provided; to improve program effectiveness by making services more accountable to consumers; and, to increase consumer control by devolving to consumers a degree of power over social program (Yin, 1975, pp. 2-3).

Burke develops the concept of consumer participation as a "strategy . . . for the attainment of specific ends." He details five strategies of participation (Burke, 1968, p. 197):

1. education-therapy — participation as an end to bring about the improvement in clients who are the object of treatment, or as a means for developing self-confidence and self-reliance.
2. behavioral change strategy — individuals are enabled through the group process to accomplish goals and thus become highly committed to the final decision.
3. staff supplement strategy — recruitment of volunteers to augment staff services.
4. cooperation — consumers are involved to prevent their interference with agency goals.
5. community power strategies — creation of a new power center.

These differing conceptions of the goals of participation reflect the view of consumer involvement as both a means and an end. Which approach in this means-ends continuum an organization selects depends upon its interpretation of its own long and short range goals.

Selected Forms of Participation

Two forms of participation that redistribute authority to consumers by creating new centers of power are neighborhood governments and community development corporations. Neighborhood governments embody the notion that the power and authority once commanded by villages and townships should be returned, via state statute, to the neighborhood level, which is seen as a political unit. Several cities have developed neighborhood facilities such as multi-purpose centers, little city halls and mayors' stations. However, for the most part, these facilities have remained under control of the mayor rather than the neighborhood. Community development corporations, (for example, the Bedford-Stuyvesant Redevelopment Corporation) reflect the view that the neighborhood is an economic unit; therefore the underlying idea is to improve jobs and economic resources by providing financial assistance to local, private neighborhood organizations, thereby revitalizing the market sector.

Several other forms of participation have been identified which, in their traditional usage, do not reallocate authority and power, although they may supplement staff, serve socio-therapeutic ends or improve program accountability and effectiveness. One such form is the use of vouchers. The

rationale inherent in this form is that consumers, when given the means to purchase services directly, either via cash payments or in-kind vouchers, can exert leverage on alternative delivery systems by deciding which programs to patronize. Supplementing staff by the use of volunteers to deliver services is another form which, in the past, has tended to involve persons with higher socio-economic status. The employment of paraprofessionals drawn from the population to be served is a third alternative form. Whether those hired are actually representative of the population served is an issue inherent in this form. A fourth form is the grievance procedure. Consumers may complain directly to any agency representative; they may request a formal consideration of their complaint via a fair hearing process; they may petition local, state or congressional representatives for redress of complaints; or they may bring court action. The concept of an ombudsman as a means of handling consumer grievances falls within this form of participation. In the past, grievance procedures have not been accessible to large numbers of consumers. The citizen poll or survey comprises a fifth form. Its effectiveness in assuring accountability to consumers depends on how the resulting information is used. For example, will the findings be part of a formal review procedure? Will consumers' opinions be considered a legitimate basis for evaluating effectiveness by staff? A sixth form is evaluation of programs conducted by consumer-dominated review teams. At issue is whether these evaluations serve as a basis for changes in agency policy, and the extent of consumer involvement in the program review process.

A final form of consumer participation is creation of organizational structures which may serve to realize several goals simultaneously, including a reallocation of power. For example, at one extreme, consumers may serve on consumer-dominated governing boards charged with developing agency policies, or on the other extreme, they may serve on advisory committees that function as a forum for staff to inform the public about plans and programs (Yin, et al., 1973, pp. 8-46).

Advantages and Disadvantages of Participation

A fundamental dilemma exists between the demand for participatory democracy, the need for expertise in decision making and effective leadership (Burke, 1968, p. 287). This

tension is reflected in the debate about the relative advantages or disadvantages of consumer participation.

Arguments supporting consumer participation make the following points: First, educating consumers enables them to become a support group which can sanction an organization's objectives. In this way, the organization's activities are legitimated to the community and an advantage can be gained in the political struggle for official acceptance of and funding for agency programs. Second, involvement may lead to a situation in which consumers may more readily accept plans which they feel they have helped to create, thus narrowing the gap between the organization and its constituents. Third, it is argued that consumers as a group will not share the same values, attitudes and beliefs as service providers, nor will they share the same objectives. Thus, consumers can offer a unique point of view. Fourth, consumers, by participating, can insure that an accountability system operates and that the organization will adapt to their needs. Participation in this sense, acts as a counterveiling power, protecting program goals from being displaced in service of the organizations' maintenance needs. Finally, there is the normative argument that, to realize a democratic state, consumers should participate in decisions affecting them.

The negatives of consumer participation are cited in the literature as well. First, some authors maintain that consumers are not interested and do not care to participate. If they are recruited, therefore, they will react critically and negatively to a situation rather than constructively, and thus their contribution will be of little value. Second, it is maintained that the "squeaky wheel" gets the program. Therefore, participation seen as lobbying for vested interests distorts a rational allocation of programs among target populations and unequal treatment results. Third, some maintain that those who do participate are not really representative of the consumer group and, therefore, are not knowledgeable about community needs. Fourth, it is held that consumers lack adequate knowledge, skills and expertise to make a significant contribution. Accordingly, participation takes too much time and effort in view of the limited return. Fifth, it has been suggested that consumers have no legal authority and therefore will not be effective in relation to official bureaucracies. Finally, it is suggested that consumer participation may produce controversy, interfere with pro-

gram functioning and in general, contribute to organizational instability (Goldblatt, 1968, pp. 31-42; Hall, 1971, pp. 17-19; Spiegal, 1968, pp. 3-21).

In deciding to adopt a strategy of consumer participation, advantages and disadvantages must be considered in light of the ends desired. If the disadvantages outweigh the possible advantages of using consumer participation as a strategy, then one must be aware that the other two alternatives remaining to legitimate program planning and administration are professional expertise and leadership, both of which may appear to be elitist.

Issues Inherent in Attempts to Involve Consumer Participants

The principle of consumer participation in federal programs has been affirmed through a variety of legislative acts and administrative regulations.

> One must also explore beneath formal structures for decentralization to the possibility that favored cadres or political groups make the real decisions while local committees go through a ritual of what can only be endorsement. Decentralization is an asset if it is utilized to make the consumer also a policy participant — whether the consumer is operating on his own or in voluntary associations and official bodies. (Kahn, 1969, p. 54)

Past experiences with programs, such as Urban Renewal, Model Cities and War on Poverty, highlighted the following issues relevant to involvement of consumer participants (Dubey, 1970, pp. 76-84; Warren, 1973, p. 342).

> Who should be involved?
>
> Who represents the community?
>
> To what extent and in what ways can and should participants help to determine programs goals and/or the means to achieve them?
>
> Where, within the organizational hierarchy, should the participatory structure be located?
>
> What should the nature of the partnership be among representatives, the public interest, the planning expert and the political bureaucracy?
>
> How should people with less technical knowledge be involved in program development without hampering the efficiency or effectiveness of the process and agency operations?

To what extent does participation provide individuals with a channel for influencing those forces impinging on their lives?

What also emerged from past experiences were differing conceptions of participation. For example, Moynihan identified four meanings to the use of the term participation: *organizing the power structure, expanding the power structure, confronting the power structure,* and *assisting the power structure* (Moynihan, 1969, p. 168).

Kramer's analysis reflects a similar conflict of interpretations of the role of the poor as participants. Four inter-related modes of resident participation were identified as: policy-making; program development; social action; and employment. Each mode reflected conflicting beliefs and assumptions regarding the causes of poverty and appropriate solutions. Out of these different interpretations arose difficulties and controversies. By way of illustration, residents were to be included in policy making. The issues involved in this mode related to the distribution of authority for control of the program between representatives of the poor and other board members. Residents involved in program development were to participate by providing advice and suggestions to planners and administrators. The issues in this mode of participation concerned the shift in role of neighborhood organizations from advisory and consultative to policy making. In social action, the third mode of resident participation, the poor were seen as a powerless group with the potential for becoming organized into a political constituency. The conflict at issue was whether the best strategy to increase their power was organization for self help with emphasis on social service delivery or organization to foster political power with emphasis on conflict tactics. The fourth mode of participation was through employment of residents in non-professional roles. Of the multiple issues that arose in connection with this mode, two included whether employment was based on capability or as a reward for ethnic or political ties; and whether the most capable leaders were, by virtue of their employment, losing their identification with the low income population and thus coopted (Kramer, 1969, pp. 1-15).

Degrees of Consumer Participation: The Balance of Authority and Power

In essence, each of the above conceptualizations of participation was a way of dealing with the same basic question: "how much decision-making power should be maintained by the elected (appointed) officials and the 'essential machinery of conventional democracy' and how much power should be delegated to those directly affected by a given program, be they known as 'consumers of services,' 'citizens,' 'the poor,' or 'residents' " (Spiegel, 1971, p. 5).

Schema have been developed for conceptualizing the balance of authority and power between service providing organizations and consumers. Brager and Specht emphasize the decision-making involvement of participants. Actions of participants may range as follows: none; receives information; is consulted; advises; plans jointly; has delegated authority; has control. Participants may be told nothing. They may receive information, as is the case when a plan is made and announced. Or, they may be consulted by an organization trying to gain sanction for a plan it is preparing to implement. They may be presented with a plan and asked to question. However, the organization will make changes only if absolutely necessary. Participants may plan jointly with the organization which presents its plan, invites recommendations, and is prepared to alter it. They may have delegated authority, in which instance, although the problem is identified and presented by the organization, participants make decisions which the organization is willing to accept. Finally, at the high end of the continuum, the participants have control. They are asked by the organization to identify the problem and make all essential decisions (Brager and Specht, 1973, p. 39).

Arnstein also has developed a framework for conceptualizing consumer participation which is similar to that proposed by Brager and Specht. She discusses a ladder of participation with each rung corresponding to the extent of the consumer's power in determining issue outcomes. Manipulation and therapy are at the non-participation end; informing, consultation and placation represent degrees of tokenism; with partnership, delegated power and consumer control reflecting degrees of consumer power (Arnstein, 1971, pp. 69-71).

Fauri suggests a typology of participation which focuses on the interaction between the professional and consumer in inverse ratio to each other. He suggests that the relative influence of each is a result of "a process of negotiation and competition for influence, domination and control" (Fauri, 1973, p. 39).

	control	absent	
CONSUMER	dominate	legitimate	**PROFESSIONAL**
	influence	sanction	
	share control	share control	
	sanction	influence	
	legitimate	dominate	
	absent	control	

Each of the above typologies represent ways of conceptualizing degrees of consumer participation. The strategy selected by an organization for sharing authority should depend on its analysis of the function and purpose of participation. Therefore, consumer control is not always desirable.

> Clarity regarding the organizational rationale for seeking participation not only contributes to a more meaningful compact between the staff and clientele, but also helps the professional answer the fundamental questions concerning who should be involved, when, how, and for what purposes? (Kramer, as quoted in Brager and Specht, 1973, p. 40)

Other considerations in determining the degree of consumer involvement noted by Spiegel, include the extent of the impact of a specific decision (i.e., local or city-wide); the area of function in which a decision is to be made; and the degree of technical expertise required by the decision (Brager and Specht, 1973, pp. 41-42).

The Experience of Involving Consumers

Selected Studies: Efforts to involve consumers in the planning process have been both successful and unsuccessful. Studies of consumer participation on boards have shown that "client representatives have a different type of board

participation than do agency-selected representatives from the larger community" (Rothman, 1974, p. 377). Consumers had much less previous board experience than other board members and were more likely to see themselves accountable to a constituency than were private board members (Rothman, 1974, p. 377).

Kramer, in a study of Community Action Programs in five Bay Area communities, found that "Low income persons per se were generally under-represented in the TAO (target area organizations in the War on Poverty) and their role and influence were small" (Kramer, 1969, p. 188). A case study of the Community Action Program in Austin, Texas, found that "representatives of the poor on the advisory boards actually have more in common with the middle-class representatives of government and service organizations on the board than they have in common with the residents of the target areas . . . the bona fide poor people are not being represented" (Hutcheson, n.d., p. 12). Another study of a Community Action Program board in Seattle found that poverty group members were not active participants but "assumed supportive and adaptive roles by making suggestions, offering opinions and giving information" (Lyden and Thomas, 1968, pp. 88-110).

Gilbert found in a study of a Community Action Program in Pittsburgh that "members quite consistently stand above their supposed constituents: they earn more money; they are more likely to own their own homes; and they are considerably more educated, with almost enough advanced degrees between them to start a small college" (Gilbert, 1970, p. 150). He concluded that this leadership group is ". . . neither forceful nor consistent in representing the interests of the poor" (Gilbert, 1970, p. 157).

Zurcher found that the most representative poor experienced role conflict in attempting to participate in policy-making for the Community Action Program and consequently stopped attending meetings. However, those that remained showed "increases in activism, decreases in particularism, while developing knowledge, competency and confidence" (Hutcheson, n.d., p. 13). Cole found in a study of participants in twenty-six neighborhood programs in four states that "citizens will find their program at least moderately successful in accomplishing its goals and that participation will increase one's political trust and confidence in public authority" (Cole, 1974, p. 120).

Marshall, in a study of community representatives to the Community Action Program in Los Angeles, found that they did not have as much power on the board as public representatives; "they share in carrying burdens and responsibilities rather than in exercising power on the board" (Marshall, 1971, p. 142). However, in terms of the effect of participation on socialization of individual community representatives she found an increase in their personal and political sense of efficacy, in their knowledge of board operations, and in their image of themselves as leaders.

The Kirschner associates study of Community Action Programs indicated that:

> . . . 'poor' board members were inarticulate and ineffective, that they felt frustrated, and their views were not respected, that they had no real control, and that they were 'inadequate to cope with the complexity of affairs confronting them. (O'Donnel and Chilman, 1972, p. 210)

O'Donnell and Chilman conclude in their review of consumers' influence on organizational decisions that:

> There are serious questions as to whether the participation of poor people on boards and committees will effectively increase the power and influence of low-income members . . . But there is also evidence that low-income people do produce leaders who can with experience become influential and effective.

Another emphasis of studies has been on consumer participants who were elderly. One research project by Estes of planning efforts by federated structures in San Diego indicated that the elderly were systematically excluded from participation in the planning process (Estes, 1972).

A second study by Fauri, of elderly consumers participating in the Model Cities program, found that projects tended to be designed by staff and presented to the elderly serving on advisory councils, who ritualistically approved the projects but did not propose alternatives. He concluded that the elderly are dependent upon professional advocates to speak out for their interests (Fauri, 1973, pp. 169-220).

An explanation for these findings is offered by O'Brien, who presents the thesis that indifference of the poor and the elderly by neighborhood organization can be derived from:

> . . . examining the rational properties of the individual poor person and the failure of neighborhood organization

> strategies to develop appropriate incentive structures with which to induce the support of rational men. (O'Brien, 1974, p. 29)

Factors Influencing Participation: A recent review of empirical studies (Yin, et al., 1973, pp. 51-66) reveals the following three features as most critical in enabling consumers to implement ideas that would otherwise not have been adopted by the service providing organization. First, meaningful influence over the budget. This includes not only the requirement for a sign-off, but involvement of consumers in the formulation and discussion of the budget as well. Second is the investigation of complaints that individual consumers have about the staff or the program. And the third factor identified is the presence of staff hired by and responsible to the consumer organization.

Other conditions posited as influencing the likelihood that consumer input will have an impact on programs include: the presence of knowledgeable participants who have had prior organizational experience; the provision of training and prompt reimbursement for expenses; and the use of specialized committees which, by permitting consumer participants to select areas of greatest interest, encourage active involvement and the development of expertise.

Organizational variables, such as structure and membership selection, also affect the degree of consumer influence. It is suggested that participatory structures composed of representatives of a variety of active organizations can have significant impact on programs if they have their own staff. However, without staff, these types of umbrella organizations have resulted in minimal implementation of consumers' views.

The process of membership selection also influences the degree of consumer input. Three types of selection procedures for consumer representatives have been identified: appointment by state of local officials, administrators, professionals or community groups; selection by an association or agency; or self-selection. Of the three selection procedures, the appointment of consumers is the weakest procedure since it is most likely that those chosen will be well-known and friendly to the wishes of the management of services, thereby increasing the likelihood of co-optation.

Members chosen by these procedures may represent an association or agency; a specific category of people such as

the elderly; or an area of technical expertise. It is important to define clearly whom members represent.

> Attaching the label of representative to individuals appointed or elected by others to speak for constituencies who have had no part in their selection does not provide for democratic delegation or acceptance of responsibility. No clear lines of communication or authority are established. The usual result of such a procedure is failure when the representative is expected to obtain action from the group of supposed origin. (Alexander, 1976, p. 7)

Conclusions

In light of the advantages and disadvantages of consumer participation, a service providing organization decides whether to involve consumers in the planning and administration of programs. For some organizations this choice may not be optional, as it is mandated in federal legislation and/or regulations. Once this initial step is taken, a decision has to be made about the purpose and function to be served by consumer involvement, taking into account the organization's short and long range goals. This, in turn, determines the desired balance of authority and power between the service providers and consumers. Based on these essential, preliminary considerations, an organization selects the most appropriate form or combination of forms of participation. Finally, if the decision is made to involve consumers through the organizational form of a Governing Board or Council structure, their contributions can be strengthened through training, staff support and reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses incurred.

"The idea of citizen participation is like eating spinach: no one is against it in principle because it is good for you" (Arnstein, 1971, p. 71). However, behavior does not always reflect ideology. With the existence of bureaucracies' indifference to consumer needs and wants, the implementation of consumer participation in such a way as to make organizations more responsive to the needs of those they serve remains an urgent challenge.

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Federal Policies: Impact on Constituent Action 6

Mel Spear

Social Policy – A definition

Social policy in and of itself does not exist in a vacuum. It exists as the articulation of the national legislative process, and the reflection of societal wish. National social policy, either as outcome or process, details the character of the Nation, explains the societal value, and reflects the image of the people and their environment. Social policy, as *outcome* cannot be dissected and analyzed without its counterpart, the *process*, being similarly treated.

While there is an implication of a common "understanding" about social policy, there has been little examination made as to the nature of such policy. Some writers on this subject appear to have avoided the issue of definition, of what is social policy, and made a leap toward the explanation of a single or narrow policy with which they agree or disagree without extending their discussion to relationship and to the broader goals of values, needs, and mandate. Social policies have been seen (1) as products, which consist of conclusions that have been reached; (2) as a process through which representatives participate in the debate on a course of action; or (3) as a framework for legislative action which includes both process and product. Some view social policy as a philosophical construct, through which organizations seek solutions for problems which must be met. In a

monarchy, a kingdom is governed through decrees that define social policy for the domain. In a democratic form of government, people and their representatives define and give authority for action collectively which can be called social policy.

Narrow definition of social policy might designate "social" as a special term apart from other terms used in conjunction with policy; a non-policy may also reflect practice which becomes deliberate, as a policy of "benign neglect," or refusal to accept the concerns expressed by some as insignificant, not a priority or interest, or contrary to another set of over-riding interests.

Social policies are not necessarily consistent with each other, but are often in contradiction to one another. Numerous vested interests and the conflict generated by such interests, lead to inconsistencies in social policy. Solutions to social problems can take place only when *change* occurs in the set of values and objectives that are current, or in the availability of essential resources, or in the ability to manage or control decision making as a method for obtaining desired results.

Thus, to decipher, or re-shape policies, we need a better understanding of the general elements of social policy, their functions, and their dynamics. From this, we can derive a framework that suggests consequence, development, alternatives. A series of questions begin to take form which reveal the outline of how specific policy can be categorized. We need to ask what are the issues that the policy deals with? What is the nature, scope, and distribution of issues? What are the objectives, values, theoretical positions, target areas, and effect of policies? Are they intended, un-intended, or a result of ignorance?

Social services and programs are responses to problems, needs, or wishes. They must be seen as components of an intricate system of policies that impact upon the nature and quality of our everyday life. The public policy must include searching analyses of national philosophies, government financing, and the social forces and mix that influence the direction of public policy. An understanding of these factors is essential to successful long-range decision making, and to comprehensive planning.

Government no less than life is infused with ambiguities and internal contradictions. But to be surmounted, they must be perceived.

Planning for Constituent Action

From the days of the War on Poverty, through the administration of Secretary John Gardner and his concept of "Creative Federalism," to Richard M. Nixon's articulation of the "New Federalism," Federal policy has clearly maintained a position of increasing the authority and responsibility of States, an expanding role for general purpose government, and the involvement of consumers in greater numbers for participation in advisory and decision-making responsibilities.

Federal policy has been directed toward the improvement of interjurisdictional approaches to solving human problems and in planning community improvement programs.

In 1964, during the planning phases for drawing up the Economic Opportunity Act, the first draft of the bill provided that a "Community Action Organization" meant one which was developed and conducted with the maximum feasible participation of the residents of the areas involved. Moynihan (1969) states that "Community action with citizen participation was a coherent and powerful idea working its way into national policy, albeit little noticed or understood at the time."

Since then, and during the past decade, constituent action has become a cornerstone in the edifice of Social Welfare planning. In the New Federalism, revenue sharing has become a major resource to demonstrate the worth and value placed by the community on its choice amongst its eight priorities.

Consumer Involvement

In the broadest sense citizen participation, particularly at the local level, is a fact of political life. In a general sense, consumer involvement or participation means activities of clients, potential clients, or their representatives who are engaged in a process designed to affect governmental programs. In the context of recent developments in governmental programming, the meaning of consumer involvement is more specific; it refers to direct action apart from formal representative government. Its justification is that with the growth of bureaucracies at every level of government, and the increasing isolation of policy-makers from clients, existing representative mechanisms are insuf-

ficient. Other ways are needed by which citizens are enabled to affect programs that may have an impact on their life.

We have seen this best exemplified in the programs initiated in urban renewal, the War on Poverty programs, and the OEO activities with Community Action programs. We are familiar with the growing expectations and militancy of groups not formerly recognized in the traditional urban power structure. "The point is not whether to have citizen participation in the broad sense — but whether to incorporate as a part of official process, a more positive form of citizen engagement" (Weaver, 1973).

Goldbratt (1966), in an article entitled "Arguments for and Against Citizen Participation in Urban Renewal," expressed the concepts of citizen participation as "grass roots democracy" by stating:

> What may be called the argument for democracy . . . does not evaluate citizen participation as a means to the objective of a successful urban renewal. Citizen participation is considered to be nothing less than democratic procedure and, hence a self-justifying end in itself.

Moynihan (1969), in describing the process of community control and local conflict describes the formation of a committee for effective community action and adds that "when it runs into trouble, a new committee is formed — the Committee for an even more effective Community Action Program."

Many persons who have participated in such community action have often been persons unaccustomed to being asked for their input, and have been unprepared to provide insight and viable alternatives to the selection of priorities or to the allocation of resources. James Q. Wilson (1962), writing on "Planning and Politics: Citizen Participation in Urban Renewal," said, "such people are usually the objects rather than the subjects of civic action: they are acted upon by others, but rarely do they themselves initiate action."

Can these disparate elements be brought together for affective constituent action? It has been suggested that it is necessary to give people grounds for believing that their efforts have a reasonable chance of influencing for the better the things they are concerned about.

From the experience over the last decade of Citizen Advisory Boards to Community Action Programs, Model Cities, Urban Renewal, and other programs, it has become

clear that there are several fundamental prerequisites for effective participation at the local level. Consumers participating in the process of planning or evaluation, need timely and accurate information, access to the decision-making process, and the availability of resources for training and technical assistance to give them a full understanding of technicalities and reasonable alternatives.

A large input to the national dialogue of constituent need was made by elderly citizens in the White House Conference on Aging, held in 1961 and 1971. The 1971 Conference had as its theme, "Toward a National Policy on Aging." It was preceded in each State and community across the land by town meetings, discussions, and hearings that gave Older Americans opportunity to tell it like it is. The conferees in Washington, D.C. in December, 1970, were fed the digests of testimony that poured forth, and were urged to articulate desired national policy. The conclusions have been published in a two-volume set, and may still be available from the U. S. Government Printing Office.

The President's Proclamation of May, 1974, proposed a three-year plan to up-grade the Senior Citizens Charter developed by the 1961 White House Conference on Aging. In 1975, suggestions from community groups were considered at the State and National levels for a new Declaration of Rights and Obligations of Older Persons, together with recommendations on their implementation. The new Declaration is intended to become a rallying point during the Bicentennial year of 1976.

Commenting critically on the 1971 White House Conference on Aging, the Social Service Review (1972) editorialized that "... White House Conferences seem ineffective devices for developing moral and/or political power sufficient to persuade or force the country to reorder its values and priorities so that adequate resources will be committed to overcoming its problems. The 1971 White House Conference on Aging developed no such moral or political power. Its primary importance is symbolic. By failing to generate sufficient power to command or demand more adequate resources for this nation's elderly, it is a disquieting symbol of American's decaying sense of moral and political values and priorities."

National Policy and Priority

What are the significant policy relationships that impact on constituent action?

The increasing number of older persons has not been accompanied by a pervasive recognition of the real or potential contribution made by Older Americans.

Our society's treatment of the elderly still seems to be based on the fiction that anyone over age 65 probably has little left to contribute to society, and therefore need not be accorded full human being status. Collective and individual guilt over such behavior by the general public can be assuaged by pointing to the care and income maintenance support we are exerting on behalf of the elderly, and the increased cost burdens that result. Witness Social Security contribution increases, or the zooming Medicare costs.

The development of the Older Americans Act, and its implementation has mirrored the theoretical constructs of Federal decision makers that have prevailed at the legislative and executive branches of government.

The Older Americans Act, from the day of its inception, has had significant *input* from the constituency it serves. Primarily, because it was designed to serve adults, numerous activities funded under Title III of the Act, Grants for State and Community Programs on Aging were projects organized, directed, and serving the elderly themselves. Project grants by State Agencies were often made to new community groups, senior organizations, or to the program activities of established public or voluntary agencies. With Older Americans expressing the desire for greater participation in community life, and striving for significant new roles to fulfill for themselves, what better way than to become engaged in the emerging social services tasks and community programs as volunteers, board members, staff and program leaders, and members of planning and advisory committees.

The current legislation continues this traditional approach and enables a geometric multiplication of leadership opportunity in the States, and in local communities.

Older Americans Act

In the Declaration of Objectives of the Older Americans Act, several significant new directions have been stressed.

Purpose was defined to make available comprehensive programs to include a full range of health, education, and

social services. It suggested that such comprehensive programs should assure the coordinated delivery of essential services, and furnish meaningful employment opportunities, including such opportunities for older persons, young persons, and volunteers from the community.

It proposed that in the planning and operation of such programs, it insure this be undertaken as a partnership of older citizens, community agencies, and State and local governments, with appropriate assistance from the Federal Government.

The Federal Register published program regulations in October 1973, indicating that the overall objective of the Title III program is "to strengthen or to develop at the sub-state or area level a system of coordinated and comprehensive services for older persons — services which will enable older persons to live in their own homes or other places of residence as long as possible."

Of greatest significance to constituent action under the 1973 Older Americans Act Amendments are the provisions of Title III that define the formation of these sub-area administrative structures, defining their goals, purpose and structure. The program is designed to strengthen or to bring into being Area Agencies on Aging charged, among others, with the following responsibilities:

- To become a focal point for leadership in the field of aging for the area.
- To engage in a continuous process of planning in order to define or redefine objectives and to establish priorities and to develop a system designed to improve the delivery of services.
- To make provision for an action program designed to coordinate the delivery of existing services for older persons.
- To make provision for an action program designed to pool available but untapped resources from both the public and private sectors in order to strengthen existing or to inaugurate new services.
- To take steps designed to achieve the establishment or maintenance of information and referral sources in sufficient numbers to assure that all older persons within the area will have a reasonably convenient access to such sources by the end of fiscal year 1975.
- To enter into contracts or make grants for inaugurating

or strengthening supporting and gap-filling services for older persons.

- To monitor and assess and conduct periodic evaluations of activities carried out under its auspices.

Regulations for the Title III program in accordance with Congressional intent, require area agencies on aging to give priority to those activities that will assist and benefit low income and minority older persons throughout the planning and service area, and which will assure, to the extent possible, that low income and minority individuals will be served at least in proportion to their relative numbers. In order to further strengthen this major program objective, the regulations included requirements that:

> **Area Plans provide for contracts or grants made under the area plan to be operated by minority individuals at least in proportion to their relative number in the planning and service area.**

And this provision was also carried over into Title VII, the Nutrition Program for the Elderly. The provision aims at encouraging participation in the implementation of the Title III program of agencies and organizations which, by virtue of their objectives and staffing patterns, knowledge of and acceptance by minority communities, and familiarity with cultural and linguistic patterns characteristic of these communities, can most effectively reach minority older persons and make available social services to them in a manner consonant with their cultural and linguistic characteristics. In this fashion, the Administration on Aging intends to insure that the largest number possible of minority older persons receive maximum benefit from the services to be provided under the Title III program.

One of the primary objectives in the Older Americans Act is articulated by the sections which relate to priorities of service which will assist and benefit low income and minority older persons.

The term "minority" means those persons who identify themselves as American Indian, Negro, Oriental, or Spanish language-speaking persons and members of any limited English-speaking groups designated as minority within the State by the State Agency.

The phrase "at least in proportion to their relative numbers in the planning and service area" refers to the

proportion of minority group persons of the total number of persons living in the planning and service area. Where the minority population comprises 10 percent of the area's population, then 10 percent of the grants or contracts under the area plan shall be operated by minority individuals. In addition, the proportion of resources allocated for minority operated grants or contracts under the example cited should reflect, at least, the same proportion as the population ratio.

Area Agencies on Aging are to follow these guidelines in the development of area plans; and State Agencies, in turn, must insure proper observance of these requirements in their review, approval and monitoring of such plans.

Potentials for Impact and Opportunity

Will the Older Americans Act of 1973 become another chapter of Federal programming, doomed to repeat history, or can it emerge to prove a potential still to be sought and made useful?

There is encouragement to constituent action, and it holds out an opportunity for participation not available to senior citizens previously. Whether it will be taken advantage of and made into an effective instrument for change awaits experience and time.

Political scientists, planners, theorists and writers explore the possibilities of how a specific policy will be effective. One writer directs attention to its virtues, another to the dis-incentives that are contained in the policy. One explores the powerlessness of the Elderly; another reports on conflict in the community planning process. An article is written on New Federalism and questions whether you can trust City Hall.

One more is written: "The New Federalism: Can the States be Trusted?" (1974) Where are we to obtain the knowledge to guide our efforts? What body of knowledge, what disciplines enable us to sort out myth from reality?

Can we obtain this from research?

John Martin (1969), the former Commissioner on Aging has written:

> Without claiming a uniform cultural aversion to the subject of aging and older people, it may be observed that there is general antipathy to discussing loneliness, poverty, infirmity, squalor and the imminence of death. Yet these are some of the major phenomena for research in this field.

> Thus, acquisition of a "good press" for aging may be one of the greatest challenges to use of social gerontology's findings in framing social policy.
>
> To date, we at the Federal level have met with some success in influencing policy formulation with project findings. However, it is my impression that most acceptance of findings has not been due to a "good press" or widespread interest in aging, but, rather, to the fact that certain studies of older people produce results significant in other contexts already commanding wide interest.

Where will we go to sort out the myths and realities of Aging?

To research?
To the Aged?
To Social Science?
To consumer participation?

Or, shall we go to those human values that we must all express about ourselves, how we want to live, and a concern about the human condition! The 7th Psalm poses to us a profound question: "Who is Man That Thou Art Mindful of Him?"

The policies are there! The question is — how are they used? And who uses them — and for what benefit?

Kenneth G. Boulding (1966) speaks of the emergent state of social awareness: "This movement of the social systems into self-consciousness is perhaps one of the most significant phenomena in our times, and it represents a very fundamental break with the past, as did the development of personal self-consciousness many millennia earlier."

Maggie Kuhn, of the Gray Panthers, often says that a major task in Advocacy and power is to reach the conscious-ness, and raise the conscious-ness of the Elderly. She suggests that experience and knowledge can be used as the leverage toward social change.

Leverage for the impact of the elderly, for effective constituent action, for participation is there. This leverage is evident in the implementation of the Act, through requirements for Advisory Councils, the creation of local Area Agencies on Aging, the expression of service priorities to those in need and to minority populations, the development of minority enterprises as service providers, the emphasis on preference for employment for persons over sixty years of age. And it is evident through public hearings on plans and

expenditures of State Agencies and Area Agencies on Aging, through White House Conference participation and the Proclamation of Rights. I cannot believe that these tools — these opportunities for participation and advocacy within the system — will fail to have some result.

I suggest that opportunity exists and that it has been legitimized in Federal policy. At this time, the Area Agency on Aging provides the best potential for participation in the making of decisions — having a say about priorities, and utilizing funds that are available in over 400 communities who have developed Area Agencies on Aging and through the 55 State Agencies on Aging.

I am not unmindful of the difficulties. But none of us can stand aside whether in academia, as staff people, or as citizens —, and deplore the state of social policy — that someone else is responsible for its misdirection.

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7 Advocacy and Planning: Its Strength, Potential and Future

Jodi Cohn

Introduction

Although questions of citizen participation and advocacy by and for older people have been addressed earlier in this volume, some of the central questions of control and efficacy in the decision-making process have not been fully explored.

This section will discuss the impact of formal organizations on the planning process, specifically the advisory councils of the Area Agency on Aging structures.

This chapter should begin with this author's definition of advocacy. The term, unfortunately, is used loosely — it can mean the wielding of clout, the development of a base to effect redistribution of power, or lobbying efforts by and for the benefit of a particular group.

This paper will use advocacy in somewhat of a narrow or limited sense — namely, the degree of input older people have on that planning process which affects their resource and social services distribution.

A conceptual issue to be clarified before continuing is the viability of mandated citizen participation vehicles (at

both the state and local levels) versus other informal organizations whose major function (along with providing some services) is advocacy and political organization, (i.e., organizations like AARP/NRTA, National Council of Senior Citizens, the Gray Panthers, etc.). Although these groups may undertake a social protest function, lobbying to influence legislation for the benefit of the elderly, or advocating on a general level for the concern of the older population, at this point they do not specifically concentrate on influencing the planning process. Basically, their impact is a consciousness-raising and political one, focused on national priorities and image-enhancement of the elderly rather than on state or local planning activities. Additionally, those in power at the local planning level may not yet recognize them as legitimate or potentially legitimate actors in the planning process.

For purposes of this chapter, I will concentrate on an institutional structure that is formally part of the planning process, the advisory council to the local designated planning body for the elderly — the area agency on aging.

In the structure of this chapter, first some of the mandated and actual roles and accomplishments of the advisory council will be defined, then the abilities of the advisory council to obtain and effect control in the decision-making process will be measured against criteria set up by two writers, Arnstein and Mogulof, who assessed the effectiveness of early citizen participation and advocacy efforts under nascent war on poverty structures. Some general considerations about advocacy and citizen participation efforts will then be discussed. Lastly, the implications of the success of advocacy efforts for federal policy, for the legitimacy of senior power, and the future of advocacy efforts in general will be assessed.

The Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council

By way of introduction, the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) are the agencies designated to plan and coordinate social services for the elderly at the local level. Funding is provided by virtue of the 1973 Amendments to Title III of the Older American's Act of 1965. The AAAs are mandated to serve several different functions, one of which is to be an advocate for the needs of the elderly. To quote from the Federal Register of October 11, 1973,

> The area agency shall carry out directly . . . provision of leadership and advocacy on behalf of all older persons within the geographic area.

As part of this function, an advisory council is to be established as an integral part of each AAA. It shall:

> consist of representatives of program participants and the general public, including low income and older minority persons at least in proportion to the number of minority older persons in the area, and shall advise the area agency on all matters relating to development and administration of the area plan and operations conducted thereunder. At least one-half of the membership of such council shall be made up of actual consumers of service under the area plan . . . (and it shall meet) . . . at least bi-monthly so that the council will assume a regular active and local role in aging policy in the planning and service area.

The premise is that these large organizations, representative of the elderly, are to effect policy, making it responsive to the constituency, and, in a larger sense, advocate for the needs and desires of the older population.

The extent of the advocacy function is not delineated; the legislation does not legitimatize "protest" activities, except in its loose directive to the agency to "be the focal point on behalf of older persons."

The advisory council of the AAA is by no means the exclusive body for impacting the planning process in regard to the elderly, but is the most generally accepted form. The state agencies, too, have their advisory bodies, but their role is less clearly defined and input at the state level is, by definition, one level removed from the population to be represented.

Advocacy Efforts Currently Practiced by the AAA Advisory Councils

This section will briefly describe the types of planning related activities typically undertaken by an AAA advisory council.

1. Legislative advocacy activities. Members involved in this type of activity, review and monitor state and federal legislation concerning the elderly, (i.e., attempts at property tax exemption, community block grant legislation, etc.), take positions on bills that may affect the elderly, and lobby on behalf of the

elderly. For most issues, however, this function is reserved to that of reviewing and reacting to bills or programs already developed. Only in rare instances is input tapped in the early stages and integrated at the policy formation step. One such example is the malpractice crisis where the advisory council was able to contribute while dialogue about the options was still open.

2. Planning, programming and monitoring functions. These activities are more closely related to the day-to-day activities of the agencies. Advisory council members can be integrated into the planning process to a large extent; however, the decision is mostly at the discretion of the staff. Involving the advisory council demands time and financial resources; as stated elsewhere in this chapter, citizen participation is a very idealistic concept, the actual implementation of which requires considerable preparation, education, and ensuing debate if there is to be a commitment to the democratic process and to the responsible integration of the advisory body's input. Financial considerations can also act as a deterrent; though members are admittedly volunteers, some AAAs are unable to pay members even for their expenses, imposing several limitations on the extent of their travel and time.

Advisory council members have been involved in some of the secondary, but nonetheless valuable planning functions that the agency must undertake. These areas might include proposals from sub-contractors, monitoring and evaluating the ongoing sub-contracted projects, and testifying at public hearings. Again these are "reactive" kinds of activities, critiquing and responding to programs and plans already in effect rather than initiating and formulating programs.

Staff Expertise Versus Citizen Expertise

Where should the division in authority fall between staff and citizen group? Unavoidably the question of staff expertise and responsibility over advisory, or citizen input, arises. As much a partnership as can be developed, there may still remain a differentiation in the designated tasks of staff and advisory council. The council consists of individuals who are unpaid, chosen because of their specific ability to represent

the target population and whose function is not designed to supersede that of staff but to augment it, challenge it and serve as a responsible sounding board. The opposing argument is that anything short of total control by the advisory council and opportunity for full input is tokenism.

It would be naive to imagine that this type of conflict would not exist, expecially in the early stages when roles are being defined. Older individuals argue (rightfully at times) that they are in the best position to assess the needs of the elderly. When is it appropriate for staff to step in? Where should professional training and judgment take precedence over intuitive, or experiential assessment of priorities and feasibility of plans? Much of this is a matter of discretion; at times, it may be appropriate for staff to remain on the sidelines, risking that perhaps the council may make some mistakes and profit from them. This dilemma is made easier when the question is purely technical, i.e., the proper slope on which to site a building. In this case, a professional would be remiss not to offer his advice. But few planning issues are that clear cut, most involve disparate and competing political interests and multiple factors to be considered.

Federal Level Control

One further note of dissent can be added. It could be argued that the question of control over the planning process is merely a rhetorical one as much of the policy is made at the federal level (in the memoranda, directives and programmatic guidelines promulgated by the Administration on Aging). So as not to abstain from what it sees as its responsibility of advocacy, the Administration on Aging (the federal agency in charge of programs for the elderly) serves to maintain control over the 400+ Area Agencies on Aging. This activity is defended on the premise of achieving programmatic consistency among the AAAs, yet it simultaneously acts to diminish the *discretionary* power of the local agencies. One such example was the agreement between the Administration on Aging and the Department of Transportation regarding funding for special transportation projects. The agreement made at the federal level specified that funds allotted to state agencies on transportation would be used for capital expenditures while AAA funds would be reserved for the operating costs of these special transportation projects. The structure of the funding mechanism agreed upon was

that the grants for capital expenditures required a 20% *hard cash match*, while the AAA funds to be used for operating expenses were to be the usual 10% in-kind match. Planners on the local level, having a sense of the modest resources of community groups, immediately realized the difficulty for a potential service provider to supply 20% hard cash match plus the 10% in-kind, and would never have structured such an agreement. Thus, this example of how discretionary power pre-empted from the AAAs leads one to feel that the discussions about the degree of meaningful input advisory bodies may have in the planning process are merely academic when it is questionable how much control the agency staff itself has in priority-setting and program structuring.

Citizen Participation

Background: Certainly federal policy from 1964 and the beginning of the war on poverty has set a precedent for varying degrees of community participation. Efforts towards "maximum feasible participation," almost a cliche now, were to be made by local policymakers to integrate input from community residents. The actual results were negligible, and later even the verbal commitment to citizen involvement ebbed. Altschuler (1970) remarks that the phrase "widespread citizen participation" of 1967 legislation represented a retreat from "maximum feasible participation (p. 186)." An even further dilution was promulgated by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. That act merely specified "adequate citizen involvement." For some period of time failures were so rampant that the accounts of negative experiences monopolized the literature. Then, as a reflection of the waning attitude, professional journals and dialogue among planning agencies ceased to concentrate on the topic.

Will the citizen participation component of the AAAs prove to be any better? If so, to what can this be attributed? Do the current advisory council members have the abilities and expertise to overcome the lackings of their predecessors? What is the makeup of the advisory councils? The regulations state that over one-half the members be consumers — usually defined as individuals 60 and over. The remainder is made up of agency representatives and community people. Although Title III mandates are directed primarily to the minority poor elderly, the AAA advisory council also represents the larger constituency of all elderly. Thus a mix of affiliation,

socioeconomic status, age, ethnicity and occupational expertise has resulted in a more balanced and, perhaps for that reason, more viable mechanism of consumer input. This may also reflect Nader's (1971) theory about the emergence of retired professionals as leaders. This is not to underrate the participation and input indigenous representatives bring to the council, but much of the directional leadership within the advisory council structure to date has come from those involved in previous leadership roles.

It would be unfair to pre-judge the efforts and experiences of the AAA advisory council on the basis of the abortive history of citizen participation during the mid-60s. Clearly the AAAs broad-based representation of both elderly consumers and agency people, the accountability to the larger aging community and the expertise and professionalism of the membership separates this attempt at advocacy from prior examples.

Literature

A considerable amount of writing was stimulated by the early attempts at citizen participation. The rise of the black power movement and the demands for community control, the question of representation and a voice for the previously silent have-nots were of great interest to those setting and implementing public policy.

Although the movement encompassed the diverse demands ranging from the establishment of a mechanism for voicing community needs to actual decentralization of control, basic concepts, experiences and failures written up in the literature are similar despite varying aspirations to levels of power.

Assessment of Citizen Participation

Articles by Mogulof and Arnstein analyze aspects of the citizen participation movement that bear on this discussion of the viability of elderly advocate groups.

"A Ladder of Citizen Participation" by Sherry Arnstein, discusses the ramifications of participation and assesses the impact of specific advocacy roles. Briefly her article sets up a typology of eight levels of citizen participation: the lowest is *manipulation* and *therapy* (classed as nonparticipation); the next levels, *informing*, *consultation* and *placation* (considered

degrees of tokenism); and a third distinction specifying degrees of citizen power, namely, *partnership*, *delegated control* and the highest form of participation, *citizen control* (See Figure 1).

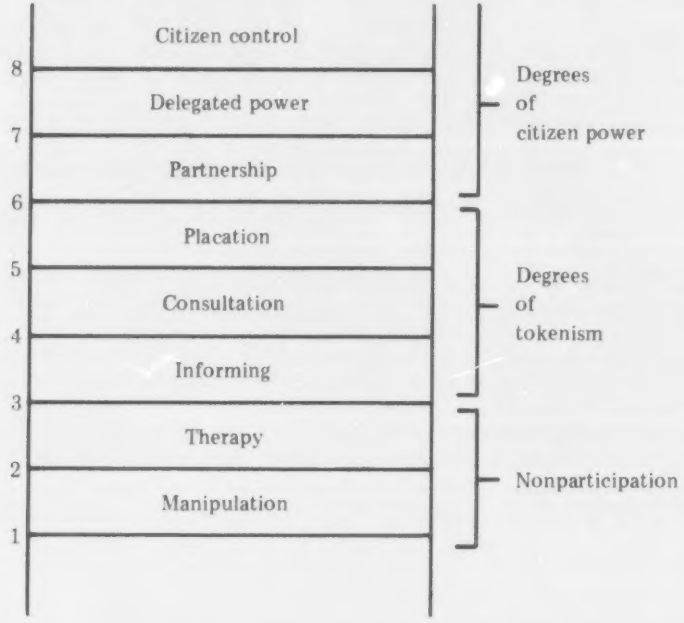

Figure 1. Eight Rungs on a Ladder of Citizen Participation

The test is whether mechanisms and activities carried out by both the agency and citizen group are merely ritualistic, a token interest in community input without the corresponding power to effect change, or truly have impact and benefits for the target group. One might question whether the ultimate stage, citizen control, is possible or even appropriate in terms of the mandates of an advisory council.

In Arnstein's hierarchy, early attempts by the AAA advisory council to provide input into the planning process

may have fallen in the placation category. She describes the typical series of events as to:

> . . . allow citizens to advise or plan ad infinitum but retain for power holders the right to judge the legitimacy or feasibility of advice . . . it is at this level that citizens begin to have some degree of influence though tokenism is still apparent. (p. 220)

From generally available knowledge of advisory council tasks and current activities, it appears that some advisory councils are leap-frogging their traditional roles and carrying out sophisticated assignments similar to those given to staff — proposal review and funding determinations and evaluation and monitoring of sub-contractors. At least one advisory council is being asked to play a substantial role in the development of the agency's annual area plan for services. It will then be used by staff as primary input in conjunction with later planning decisions. These activities may legitimately be seen as being within the area of Arnstein's third category, citizen power. She describes the first level of the citizen power category as partnership; this situation occurs when community groups engage in trade-offs with traditional power holders and the two groups "agree to share planning and decision-making responsibilities through such structures as joint policy boards, planning committees and mechanism for resolving impasses." Arnstein, however, is optimistic about the feasibility of a partnership relationship only when the following three criteria can be met: "Where there is an organized power-base in the community to which the citizen leaders are accountable; when the citizen group has the financial resources to pay its leaders reasonable honoraria for their time consuming efforts; and when the group has the resources to hire . . . its own technicians, lawyers, and community . . ." (p. 221). As an aside, these standards can stand as recommendations for further area agency implementation. She intimates the development of more aggressive tactics portending the future of advocacy efforts by a more politically sophisticated elderly.

> In most cases where power has come to be shared it was *taken by the citizens*, not given by the city. There is nothing new about that process. Since those who have power normally want to hang on to it, historically it has come to be wrested by the powerless rather than proferred by the powerful. (p. 222)

By example, Arnstein outlines characteristics of a power holding body that is truly committed to community input. In describing the failures of an organization she at the same time sets up optimal criteria:

1. Citizen participation requirements should be open to negotiation in the development of agency policies.
2. Groups should have adequate and informed access to technical assistance.
3. They should be given reasonable training to have an appreciation of the issues and to be able to make informed assessments and evaluations.
4. Citizen groups should have adequate time and sufficient information to make reasonable decisions.
5. Members should be reimbursed for expenses and, if at all possible, for their time.
6. Powerholders should provide continually increasing responsibility to the advisory body.

As a corollary to Arnstein's articles, Melvin Mogoluf in "Advocates for Themselves: Citizen Participation in Federally Supported Community Organizations" questions the purposes of participation on a community level.

He first delineates the possible purposes — among them (1) decreasing alienation; (2) engaging the "sick" individual in a process that will help him; (3) creating a neighborhood power force to influence the distribution of resources; and, (4) developing a constituency for a particular program, with the hope that the constituency will agree to the intended program effects. These first two he sees as very rarely written into the intent of legislation, though possibly they are found in the Model Cities or Community Action Programs. Within those two programs there are sophisticated policy groups that control portions of the program decision-making process. In terms of a radical or protest orientation, certainly only the Community Action Program guidelines legitimated such activities.

Mogulof then discusses two types of mandates for citizen involvement. The first calls for some general type of citizen involvement, but does not designate a target group of specific type of involvement, while the other calls for a specific type of limited purpose involvement, i.e., an advisory council to govern over a specific program — very much the mandate of the advisory council for the AAA.

He then diagrams several models of relationships between citizen participation bodies and established decision-

making bodies (See Figure 2).

The AAA would fall within situation B, for C purports a distinct separation of the two bodies that has not yet occurred or been attempted in AAAs. Situatior B simulates an "integrated" structure of decision-making, "which seeks to establish decision-making coalitions including formerly excluded elements of the community," based on the realization that "advice-giving" is not a satisfactory form of citizen participation" (p. 74).

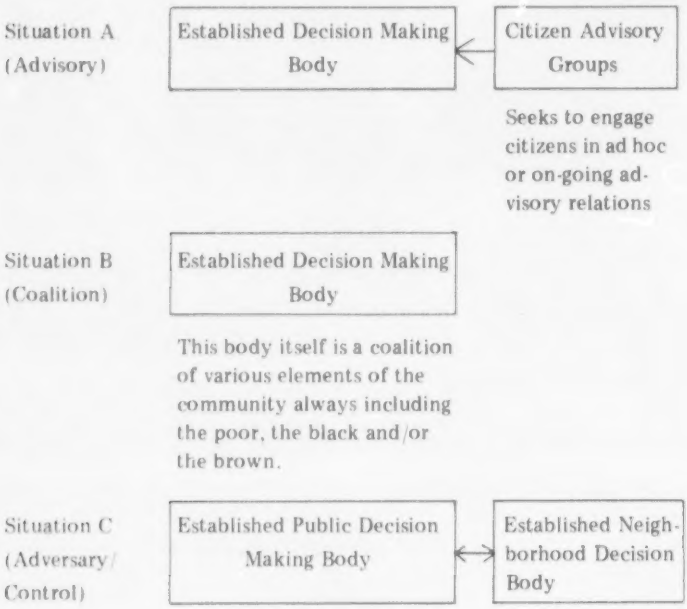
Situation A
(Advisory)
Established Decision Making Body
Citizen Advisory Groups
Seeks to engage citizens in ad hoc or on-going advisory relations
Situation B
(Coalition)
Established Decision Making Body
This body itself is a coalition of various elements of the community always including the poor, the black and/or the brown.
Situation C
(Adversary/
Control)
Established Public Decision Making Body
Established Neighborhood Decision Body
The neighborhood body is dominated by representatives of the poor/black/brown; has an authorized position in certain processes of community decision making or itself has control of decision making.

Figure 2

But Mogulof sounds a pessimistic note for the continuance of this type of structure.

> The weakness in advisory relationships between neighborhood and "establishment" may presage a shift to advisory-control structures for decision-making. (p. 74)

On the subject of control, he discusses a two-fold concept, stating:

> thus the issue is no longer primarily whether and to what extent individual citizens are to be involved in planning and delivering social services, but rather how much control geographic neighborhoods or ethnic minorities (often coterminous) are to have over public programs serving them. (p. 66)

Because the client group at issue is all elderly, rather than any supposedly cohesive ethnic minority, the implications for control, or even for identification on the basis of an age are reduced. Though older people may rally temporarily on a common issue (i.e., reduced transit fares) there is little evidence that all older people identify purely on an age basis, with the exception of an issue like Medicare or Social Security, that cuts across ethnic, income and occupational lines. It is true that powerholders may be insensitive to the lack of identification on the basis of age, and view the elderly population as a cohesive, docile one. Thus, decision-makers currently feel confident about testing out new programs on the elderly. This attitude may change, however, as the elderly grow more politically astute and less willing to submit to experimental programming.

Although Mogulof addresses the issue of "control" and its desirability, this does not appear to be the main question at issue with the area agencies. The advisory councils probably have little impetus for full control, or for totally overriding the agency staff — instead the desired relationship is more likely a partnership, one of mutual respect, authority and responsibility.

Benefits and Drawbacks of Citizen Participation

Though everyone speaks to the necessity of citizen participation in keeping with democratic ideals, the actual benefits of providing advisory councils with responsibility and observable decision-making control should be reiterated.

1. It provides a legitimate mechanism for *real* (as opposed to token) participation.
2. It develops a sense of confidence, expertise, credibility, and participation.
3. It provides the council with an appreciation of staff tasks, pressures and dilemmas that may result in closer cooperation and less staff-advisory council conflict in future planning.
4. Most importantly, if it works properly, it would orient planning and service priorities to those most responsive to the expressed needs of the elderly.

Drawbacks

Citizen participation and input into the planning process is undoubtedly difficult. Planning, programming and budgetary issues facing any agency today are by definition complex and the knowledge, time and commitment required by the staff and council is overwhelming. Thus, without reasonable timelines and adequate training and preparation of community groups, citizen participation efforts will again be programmed for failure.

Implications for the Future of Advocacy by the Elderly

What do the current advocacy efforts portend? Will we see a rise in expertise, abilities and impact in advocacy efforts of the elderly? Or, will the movement amount to no more than additional awareness of the needs of the elderly as a group, without the corresponding rise in power. More importantly, will this power base be recognizable to the policymakers as well as to the participants themselves? Certainly any small successes along the way, and the continued learning potential of the experience act as incentives. In this, the 3rd year of AAA funding, the increased polish and knowledge of citizen groups in both substantive planning issues and the politics of the process are evident. These nascent activities will have a snowball effect as additional older people gain skills, the power base grows in legitimacy, and new leaders are encouraged to emerge.

Just as the elderly have been used as "trial populations" for government programs in the past, (i.e., Medicare as a tester for national health insurance, and Supplemental Security Income as a forerunner of the federalization of

general welfare programs), it is likely that the experiences (hopefully the positive ones) of the advisory councils and other elderly advocate groups, may serve as a precedent for consumer participation in the planning process on a scale not achieved before. The elderly have often been perceived as a non-threatening client group; placement of public housing sites for elderly are typically much better received by a neighborhood than projects for other populations. This acceptability of the elderly may change as the style of older people grows more sophisticated and possibly more radical. Certainly, older advocates today can be characterized as far more vocal and perhaps more radical than those of several years ago.

Discussion about implications of advocacy efforts should not be restricted only to the AAA advisory councils; their tenure is indefinite in that they may either be merged under another government or community agency or disappear altogether. Practically speaking, the uncertainty of their status demands an even stronger advocacy stance in order to retain the gains and expertise developed. Nonetheless, the future recognition, acceptance and viability of "gray power" as a movement rests on the existing models. These questions of role definition also pertain to the state and federal level — where advocacy bodies operate in conjunction with the state agencies on aging, and the Federal Council on Aging, a 15-member board, serves as an advisory to the President.

The results of meaningful advocacy efforts can be expected to manifest themselves in several ways: the development of programs responsive to the needs of the elderly; the flowering of elderly advocate groups along the more radical lines of Gray Panthers, with attention given to development of coalitions of both young and old; in the redistribution of power; and most importantly the development of an identifiable movement with the accompanying prestige and clout.

Currently the premise behind the AAA's division of power and other categorical programs for the elderly is that separate agencies are necessary to guarantee fairshare allocation to the elderly. The argument for categorical (versus generic) organizations is stated concisely by Kerschner and Hirschfield.

> Any discussion of service programs for the elderly in the United States inevitably turns to the issue of categorical versus non-categorical programs. Since service needs cut

> across many agency boundaries and no single agency coordinates these efforts (to provide comprehensive services) . . . the consequences are inefficiency, repetition, and competition. As the aged disappear into and suffer from the morass created by this system, there is compelling evidence that a categorical stance is vitally needed. (p. 352)

Were elderly advocate efforts to grow persuasive, the continual justification for categorical programs might be jeopardized.

Nonetheless, with longer range goals in mind — namely, the development of a mechanism for affecting the planning process and the organization of means for achieving change in societal attitudes towards the elderly — this programmatic issue pales, and the real issue of self-determination and advocacy for the elderly emerges as the focal issue.

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advocacy and age

II.

experiences

what old people want for themselves and others in society 8

Margaret E. Kuhn

Many of us have realized that we have reached our seniority in a new age — an age of liberation and self-determination. In this age, great sweeps of change are swirling around our planet, affecting every person, every profession, every institution and every human group.

Some of us are uncomfortable in this new age, and resentful of the changes around us. Many of us have resigned ourselves to a society which we feel has no place for us. Some have "copped out" and have tried to escape change and social involvement. Some of us are so brain-damaged by society and its age barriers that we hate ourselves and our aging bodies. We will not admit that we are old. We keep trying, in vain, to look young. An increasing number of us are outraged about the injustice and dehumanization we see and are ready to work for basic societal change. After all, we are the most free to take the risks required.

Many old and young people are responding to our Gray Panther movement. They view it as a positive force for change, and a means for their empowerment. They also are beginning to see how they can use their freedom from the constraints of job and family to be advocates for social change and a new, more human and just society.

There has been a surprising national response to what Gray Panthers have been saying and doing. At times we have been overwhelmed by it! We started with a small group of six

retirees four years ago; we now have in our network some 8,000 old and young people. Ours is a movement for change and social justice, using the experience and survival knowledge of old people and the idealism and energy of young people to change attitudes and social policy.

It has been observed that old people do not have access to power, that we have been isolated and pushed out of the mainstream. As a matter of fact many of us are out of it, but there are a number of rich, old people who do have power and access to power — particularly men who serve on powerful and prestigious boards of directors, involved in making decisions that have far-reaching social consequences. But these affluent powerful elders (by and large) do not identify with their peers who are not rich and powerful — those who are, instead, powerless and without access to power. They do not consider themselves to be old, or see themselves as advocates of old people. As I have analyzed this lack of identification, the divisions seem to be on the basis of social and economic class.

Two years ago I was elected to the Board of four rather posh church-related institutions — three retirement homes for the well-to-do, well elderly, and one extended care facility. The Board has been highly paternalistic in its governance of these institutions. Its members have the management style of benevolent despots. Two elderly lawyers dominate the committee. There is a residents' affairs committee of the Board on which I serve. It is chaired by another Board member who must be at least ten years my senior. Directors of the four institutions and the Ladies Auxiliary representative make up the committee. When I asked the chairman where the residents' representatives were, I was told that "the directors know what the residents need and want and are encouraged to bring these needs to the attention of the Board." A few months later when I brought to the Board the recommendation from the General Assembly that church-related homes should have a program council elected by the residents, and be governed by a board made up of at least 25% of the residents, an elderly board member sniffed derisively and said, "That will happen in this Board over my dead body."

There is also the phenomenon of tokenism — for instance, the Rochester Institute of Technology convened a group of personnel officers of the large corporations home-based in Rochester. They met for a year or more to

develop retirement planning programs for their firms. Token retiree input came from a retired Eastman Executive.

A special Task Force on Advocacy & Participation was set up by the Pennsylvania State Office on Aging. I was one of the three retired persons on the Task Force. Thus, the make-up of the Task Force was, in itself, evidence of the need of the inquiry we were making and the recommendations we were drafting.

So I came to a discussion of Power & Advocacy recognizing that:

1. Efforts must be made to raise the consciousness of powerful old people so that they will identify with their peers, begin to acknowledge their own age and close ranks with the rest of us.
2. Models and methods must be devised to give older Americans points of entry to the places where decisions are made that influence and mold public policy.

People working in our movement have worked through and gone beyond the so-called "Senior Power" view of ourselves and the way we want to use our experience and years of accumulated skills and knowledge. We do not wear *Senior Power* buttons or think of ourselves as special pleaders for the cause of old people and old people's campaigns. Nor are we trying to build another national organization like NCSC or NCOA. Our goal is to use our freedom, our experience, our knowledge of the past, our ability to cope and survive, not just for free bus fares or tax rebates for people over 65, although we need these benefits. We want to work as *advocates* for the larger public good, as public citizens and responsible consumers.

We see our needs and losses, our lack of power and place, as exaggerated forms of the needs and lacks of our sick society; we also see them as a powerful judgment and social criticism of the dehumanizing forces created by our galloping technology, and the priority we give as a nation to profits and productivity.

We are finding and perfecting ways of using our experience as leverage for constructive social change and *advocacy*. Although society devalues us and wastes our experience by enforced retirement, we regard our experience as a positive good — the nation's largest untapped and unused human resource.

The 1st step in preparing us for advocacy roles is our personal liberation from the agism of society. This involves the acceptance of old age with grace and an authentic maturity, without self-hate or self-deceit.

The 2nd step is awareness and analysis of our experience and appreciation of how we have coped with change and survived. Particularly important in this period of economic recession is what we remember about the depression of the thirties. Anyone who lived through the depression and survived it has a valuable tool for dealing with the economic deprivations that all alienated minorities suffer today, including old people.

The 3rd step is to make an inventory of our skills — what we know and what we know how to do. Although society has conditioned us to believe that our skills are worthless, we know better, and the assessment of these skills and their application to present day problems can be a very significant part of our empowerment, and leverage for change.

The 4th step requires us to update our knowledge and to acquire new knowledge so that we thoroughly understand the sickness of our society, what oppresses us, what devalues us, and what society needs to heal it and make it human again.

The 5th step is to take a wholly new and positive view of our weaknesses and losses. Many old people develop physical handicaps. Many suffer loss of hearing and eyesight. Our chronic diseases and impairments can be our strength and used to remind powerful people in the corporate structures of society of their corporate responsibility and their inhumanity. We could cite many illustrations. For example: the deaf people who are most effective witnesses in state hearings on legislation to regulate the sale of hearing aids, and protect the hearing impaired consumers from unscrupulous hearing aid dealers and their high pressure sales tactics. Another illustration: the "House Call" which the Chicago Gray Panthers made on the American Medical Association and its powerful House of Delegates meeting in Chicago in June, people in wheelchairs, on canes and

crutches, blind people guided by sighted people and seeing-eye dogs, marched around the Palmer House in Chicago's busy Loop to press 3 demands on the AMA for, 1) "House Calls" and treatment of patients in their home environment, 2) Mandatory courses in Geriatrics and Gerontology in Medical Schools and 3) Consumer representation in the House of Delegates. Impairment is no excuse for a "cop-out."

The 6th step is to learn to overcome the frustrations we feel when we do not have an opportunity to use what we know or to apply our experience. We must help each other to find points of entry into the decision-making processes of society and leverages for social change — for example, interviews with the press, with full disclosure and exposure of what we have been deprived of and how society has become depersonalized.

The 7th step is to resist all efforts and pressures to put us on the sidelines, in other words, to consign us to what I have called glorified play pens where the only appropriate activity for "seniors" is to have fun and play games. Such approaches trivialize old age and compound the waste of human resources. They cannot be tolerated and must be changed, and we are the ones to initiate the change.

As advocates for change and social justice for society as a whole, we recognize that we cannot hope to motivate everybody over 65 to join our movement. We have modest goals and hopes for the enlistment of small numbers of wrinkled radicals who are fully committed people, willing to engage in controversy and take the risks involved.

The 8th step is to secure training for advocacy. Training is of the utmost importance — training to increase our social awareness, training to expose us to the roots of our present social ills and training that gives small groups opportunity to establish clear goals and to learn what advocacy is all about.

The 9th step is to form and/or join in coalitions having similar action orientation. Social change cannot be engineered by any one group. The action is strengthened by joint effort.

The 10th step is to document the need for change with the experience and case histories of people who are affected by a problem. Documented facts are powerful persuaders. Documentation of problems has the human appeal of a testimonial ad.

We believe that new training is necessary for all professionals working with old people. These include researchers in Gerontology, directors of multi-purpose centers, state and area offices on aging, employees, directors of nursing-homes and retirement communities, faculty members in schools of gerontology, etc.

We are glad that a growing number of multi-purpose centers are now receiving new program guidance and direction and are recognizing that such guidance is available. Some multi-purpose centers have become service-oriented rather than recreation-oriented. This is a step in the right direction. The expanding services now being offered in nutrition and health are changes for the better, but we would like to see some action and advocacy beyond the delivery of social services. The centers should be focusing on bringing together people with similar problems (not to be served on a one-to-one basis), and organizing these into cadres for social change. We are aware that people in a few centers are becoming involved in legislation and political action. Old people, under the direction of the professionals serving them, are being taken to state capitols and the offices of mayors to lobby for particular kinds of legislation, but many of these efforts seem to be due to the programming of the professionals rather than the result of an increased social awareness and the radicalization of old people. The professionals need to take new roles. The sickness of our society and our focus on social change and self-determination requires new roles for all of us. These roles are briefly described as:

1. The Role of Advocacy

To advocate change requires personal growth and self-awareness on the part of all who are oppressed and trying to change their condition, and also for those who are working with powerless minorities. This is the age of liberation and self-determination. Advocacy requires interaction with others and reflection upon such action. It necessitates the end of paternalism and patriarchal management. Once we begin to reflect critically about ourselves, how we think and feel, how

we interact with others, we can begin to change within ourselves, building both a self-confidence and a trust in one another. Liberation is both personal and private as well as social and public. There is always tension between the private and the public spheres. Without inner change and self-awareness on the part of the professionals as well as our elderly peers, we cannot raise the consciousness of society, or build a new base of power to change society.

As advocates of change, we seek to change systems and structures rather than to ameliorate the hurt and adjust the oppressed to accept their oppressors. We seek shared power and responsibility in making the decisions that affect our lives. Powerless ones are the old people (particularly elderly women and other minorities), the poor and the sick people. We seek employment of ourselves and control over our own lives; empowerment out of the systems in mainstream society by efforts to challenge and change these systems. We work to create new, democratized, decision-making processes that will be more human and just. Such efforts include:

a) Use of mass media to enlarge public awareness and raise the consciousness of the isolated powerless ones, including old people who are shut in and institutionalized.
b) Convening of consciousness-raising groups of old and young people to discuss and analyze their experiences in society, age stereotyping, and what it does to persons in order to increase social awareness and pride in our experience and potential strength. From this we seek to build a new community of support for change.
c) Redirection and democratizing of groups in institutions.
d) Alternatives for institutions. Example: extended home care instead of nursing home care.
e) Testimony on behalf of the powerless in public hearings.
f) Interpretation by state and city commissions on aging of the contribution of old people to church and synagogue leaders and groups and the enlistment of advocates from religious communities.
g) Participation in movements to liberate women, especially older women, for example: NOW's Task Force on Older Women.

2. The Role of the Social Critic

As "the elders of the tribe" and professionals in aging, we must prepare ourselves to challenge oppressive powers by

continuing analysis of their policies and systems, confronting them with the social consequences of what they do with their own forgotten humanity. Western society has become a plastic world with plastic products. Last winter a large oil company advertised "virgin acrylic blankets," available at half-price for new credit card holders. What under the sun is "virgin acrylic"? We need to realize that many aspects of our society are dead or dying, devoid of meaning and human value. The quality of life steadily declines. Many aspects of our society are sick and in need of healing. Existing systems are set up for profit and those who control production grow richer, and those who have no input into production grow poorer. Profits and productivity are given priority, *not people.*

We cite two massive systems which are alleged to serve people, but turn out to be the paraphernalia of oppression:

- The Health Care System and the American Health Empire which provide large profits for those who provide so-called services and the oppressive non-system for the users or consumers of health services. The health crisis demands a radical change and nothing short of a national health service, similar to that of Canada, Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries. Social critics affirm the rights of patients, and hold the providers of health services accountable for according patients their rights.

- The Transportation system and America's continuing love affair with the private automobile. Researchers have documented the lack of adequate, mass transportation as a major cause of the social isolation of old people. The fact that large areas of our country have *no* public transportation, not even taxis or mini-buses, is a scandal. Upwards of six billion dollars a year comes into the Highway Trust Fund from gasoline taxes. Only a trickle of this huge sum goes to develop and subsidize public transport. Powerful lobbies, including car manufacturers and auto workers, tire and tool makers, road builders and makers of road building machinery, conspire to keep the trust funds intact.

Some aspects of our society are still healthy so that some evidences of hope and recovery are discernable. Our social analysis should help us to see where healing and hope may be found. Our experience, our sense of history and

awareness of our own history, are important elements of this role of critic.

3. The Role of Testers of New Models and Life-Styles

Old people and the professionals working with us must dare to "try on the future for size." As old people, we are free to challenge and initiate change. We can experiment with —

- Communal living and discover how to live comfortably and happily in small groups who will care for each other. Such groups share expenses, living arrangements, food preparation and community interests. They can become extended family groups, related not by kinship but by common concern.
- Transgenerational education and go back to books and school with young people the age of our grandchildren. In such "open classrooms" young and old learn from and teach each other.
- New ways to buy essentials by setting up "food and housing co-ops," pooling social security income.
- New kinds of retirement preparation and training for second and third careers, quite different from the first career.
- New kinds of public interest work (described below).

4. The Role of Public Citizen

Although compulsory retirement policies may force us to retire from our jobs at 60 or 65 years, we need never retire from our responsibilities as consumers and citizens. We are, for example, the nation's largest consumers of health services and drugs. Even after rigor mortis sets in, we continue to be substantial consumers of the services of undertakers and casket makers or crematoria.

As consumers we oldsters have the time and the experience to investigate all kinds of dubious, exploitive and fraudulant products and sales of products and services.

As public citizens we have time, experience, and judgment to press for corporate responsibility and accountability in stock holders' meetings of corporations. We can serve as watchdogs in the courts, the meetings of city councils and state assemblies, and keep in communication with our elected representatives. We can organize citizen

protests against increases in public utilities' rates, and lack of safety in public housing projects, and in support of the safe, low cost public transportation. We have nothing to lose by such action!

Gray Panthers and Ralph Nader's Retired Professional Action Group (RPAG), were organized for rather similar goals and purposes. Three and a half years ago Gray Panthers began with a cadre of six, and a few months later RPAG was launched with a similar cadre of retired professionals. The two groups merged in December, 1973, continuing:

a) *investigative research* on pensions, patient care in nursing homes, and the sales practices and quality control of hearing aids;

b) *legislative action* including testimony in congressional and state legislative committees;

c) *confrontation* of the American Health Empire and the AMA;

d) *interpretation* of issues and strategies for change in press, radio and television;

e) *organization* of Gray Panther networks and coalitions;

f) *monitoring* of services for the aging;

g) *training* groups for public interest work.

As wrinkled radicals and liberated old people, we can testify that our new roles empower us and hopefully release new power and energy in the places where we live as liberators, social critics, responsible consumers, and public citizens. We have discovered that old age has three great advantages:

1. We can speak our minds and get fair hearings (if we have done our homework!)
2. We have outlived much of our opposition. The people who put us down in earlier years are not around now. It is all clear sailing through high waves of controversy.
3. We have access to new sources of energy and strength — physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. When we reach out to others and transcend our selfish selves miraculously we forget our aching joints and falling hair, our failing strength and slowing gait.

And all of this sure beats Geriton!

9 Black advocacy, techniques and trials

Hobart C. Jackson

Obviously there is no one trial and/or frustration in attempting to become involved as an advocate for the Black elderly. There are many. In a similar manner, the techniques and strategies designed to do something constructive about this problem also must be many and varied. Perhaps the most difficult of all the trials or barriers to overcome in the effort to achieve social justice, equity, decency, and dignity for the Black aging and aged are the pernicious though subtle effects of institutionalized racism, an inflexible and unresponsive bureaucracy, and unrelenting poverty. In addition there are the usual difficulties associated with ageism and sexism.

Overall Assessment

We cannot begin to address the subject of advocacy for Black aged without giving the context in which their needs exist. It is my firm conviction that the special problems of aging and aged Blacks are but a microcosm of the total problems of the country, and we cannot really make substantive and long range progress in meeting these special needs until we begin to take some "giant steps" on our overall domestic problems. And, in my opinion, we're not taking them.

It seems that almost every meaningful opportunity that we have to move things along is rejected. Witness the recent

United States Supreme Court decision that seemingly rejected the busing of pupils to achieve racial integration. I agree with Superior Court Justice Thurgood Marshall who said, "We deal here with the right of all of our children, whatever their race, to an equal start in life and to an equal opportunity to reach their full potential as citizens. Those children who have been denied that right in the past deserve better than to see fences thrown up to deny them that right in the future." Justice Marshall called the opinion "a giant step backwards" assuring that Blacks will have the same separate and inherently unequal education in the future that they have been unconstitutionally afforded in the past. He called the decision more of a reflection of perceived public mood than an enforcement of the Constitution's guarantee of equal justice.

It is this kind of decision that perpetuates the necessity of groups like a National Caucus on the Black Aged, for there is no doubt that the inequities plaguing these youngsters will continue throughout their lifetime.

There can be no denying, in my opinion, that America's most urgent and major domestic problem is the existence of mass poverty disproportionately experienced among Blacks and other racial minorities. This problem, of course, is compounded by the institutional racism which persists in plaguing us and a bureaucracy insensitive to human need.

The most devastating examples of what can happen in this kind of a society manifest themselves in those who suffer the multiple jeopardy of being old, Black, poor, disabled, handicapped, or sick where problems of one type are simply compounded by others.

These problems are inextricably interwoven into the fabric of our society and unless this fabric can be mended shortly, we are well on our way to becoming a permanently selfish, divided, petty society with no higher ambition than material comfort for a chosen few and no lofty vision of our destiny.

Special Concerns of Aging and Aged Blacks

Let us look at some of the special concerns that older Blacks have at the national level. Let us start this exercise by indicating how many there are and their approximate rate of growth. According to 1960 census figures, there were 1,200,000 older Blacks at that time. The number of the

Black elderly increased about 400,000 or 33-1/3% during the decade, 1960 to 1970, and that is a more rapid rate of growth than was evident in the white counterparts. The overall total reached 1,600,000 in 1970 and our best estimates are that there are more than 1,700,000 currently (1974).

Blacks have a lower life expectancy than whites resulting, I feel we can certainly safely assume, primarily from the generally lower socio-economic status they are accorded in this country. For although comprising almost 12% of the total population, Blacks make up only eight percent of those over 65. The effects of institutionalized racism in this connection seem to fall more heavily on Black men, if we use this expectancy as the criterion

Black women outlive men to an increasing extent and as Dr. Jacquelyne Jackson has so well documented in "Quadruple Jeopardy: Black and Female and Old and Poor" in 1970 there were only 76 males for every 100 females in our aged Black population, or stated another way there were 131 Black women for every 100 Black men over 65. But one of the unfortunate yet significant things about this, is that the proportion of women to men is increasing. In 1960, ten years earlier, there were 115 Black elderly women for every 100 Black elderly men.

This disparity represents one of the most poignant social problems that we face. Because of this great imbalance we must begin to think of ways to serve better Black elderly women who are alone or certainly who have no husbands. In addition there is a larger percentage of older Blacks than whites who do not live with their spouses. This has been attributed by some to the greater economic pressures on families, including public welfare laws which encourage Black men to leave home early in life.

It has been estimated that up to 60 percent of the elderly in the United States live in sub-standard housing. Some 75% of the Black elderly are subjected to this inequity. This is largely a result of outright poverty or marginal income. Two-thirds of all old people own their own homes. About 30% of the Black elderly enjoy this luxury. However, most of these homes were purchased in early adulthood 40 to 50 years before, and many have become sub-standard. The remaining one-third of the elderly live with relatives or friends, in retirement villages, in rented tenements, retirement hotels, or low and middle class government subsidized

housing, sponsored by unions, churches and benevolent associations. Some of the elderly live in public housing which is often seen by them as a highly desirable resource in view of the wretched alternatives available. Finally, many oldsters are so poor they cannot even afford public housing.

According to one study, only 3% of the tenants living in Federally subsidized housing for the elderly under private sponsorship are Black and two-thirds of those live in Black run developments. This leaves only about 1% in so-called integrated housing, yet these developments are Federally subsidized. This is a gross inequity! The study was completed under the leadership of Dr. Powell Lawton of the Philadelphia Geriatric Center.

Poverty, like sub-standard housing, is typically a part of age. People who were poor all their lives can expect to become poorer in old age. But they are joined by a multitude of people who become poor only after becoming old. Although old people represent 10 percent of the total population, they constitute more than 25 percent of the poor in America. We produce a new generation of the elderly poor every year. Eighty-five percent of the elderly poor are white. There are clearly many more poor whites in actual numbers than Blacks. However, a greater proportion of the Black aged are poor and their poverty is more profound. In 1970 one-half of the Black aged were poor compared to not quite one-fourth of the white aged. Forty-seven percent of all Black aged females (the poorest of the poor) had incomes under $1,000 yearly. It's our impression that many more live in extreme poverty than these figures indicate.

Employment should ideally be a matter of choice after age 65. Indeed old people do earn 29 percent of their income. But their ability to work is hampered by two major factors: the social security ceiling on earnings, and age discrimination in employment.

Black aged men participate in the labor force in the same proportions as whites, but earn less, do harder physical work and are in poorer health. Black elderly women are more likely to work than white women, indicating their greater need to support themselves or supplement their husbands' earnings. They, like Black men, earn less, usually doing domestic and service work. Retirement by choice is less of an option because Blacks' retirement benefits are often meager, in line with their previous low earnings. Indeed there may be no benefits at all. When they can no longer work the Black

elderly are simply mustered out of the labor market.

As has been astutely pointed out in Aging and Mental Health by Robert Butler, M.D., and Myrna Lewis (1973), it can be observed that staying out of institutions is not as big a problem for older Blacks as getting into them when they are needed. Nursing homes and homes for the aged remain largely segregated even though segregation is usually not openly stated as a policy. It is estimated that only 3 percent of the residents and patients are Black. Whites do not generally apply for admission to Black homes and white homes usually claim they have not received any "qualified" Black applicants. Black owned and operated facilities tend to have great difficulty meeting health, fire and building standards and may be closed rather than given assistance and encouragement. Many non-profit, church-sponsored homes avoid integration by restricting admissions to their own parishioners, — already a self-selected group in terms of race and social class. In addition to racial discrimination the lack of the ability to pay works against utilization of good proprietary homes by Blacks.

When a Black older person requires institutional care, state hospitals and county governmental institutions are the only facilities routinely available. There is an absence of long term care opportunities for Blacks in their own communities.

The practice of closing Black institutions because they do not meet standards instead of developing an approach that enables them to excel in their performance has resulted in the systematic erosion and deterioration of services to Black and poor people.

If other facilities were truly "open" to Blacks the situation would be different, but they are not! The effect then of closing the Black institutions is regressive and is abhorrent and repugnant to Black communities.

In this connection, the Black church has proved to be a stabilizing force, providing the elderly with social participation, prestige, and power in the internal life of the parishioners. We should be looking more and more to the Black church for needed support and services for the Black elderly.

Both research findings and personal experiences document the inescapable conclusion that health and other life sustaining services for the Black aged are grossly neglected. They are denied the services that are in principle available to them if health care services are viewed as "rights" not "privileges."

The high incidence of poor health among Blacks of all ages inevitably leads to a higher death rate for Blacks than for whites. It is, in fact, shockingly high in this sophisticated and enlightened era of medical breakthroughs against the killing diseases.

Some Advocacy Techniques

Now let us look at some other specific programs and services and some of the techniques of our advocacy: With the trend in the Administration on Aging toward decentralization to the State Units on Aging, we feel that a tremendous amount of work needs to be done with these State units to make them meaningful to older Black persons.

Among the positions that we have enunciated is one that all programs, services, and facilities that are subsidized by Federal funds should serve the Black elderly at least to the extent of their population proportion in the community served, preferably more than that because of the multi-dimensional aspects of their problems. Certainly the staffs and commissions of State units also need to involve Blacks and other minorities in this same proportion, through affirmative action efforts, to achieve this kind of balance.

We have received a commitment from Dr. Arthur Flemming, the Commissioner of the Administration on Aging, that the influence of his office will be supporting this approach. We have a responsibility to monitor these agencies and see to it that they live up to this commitment.

Another trend that we should identify is the cutting off of funds for education and training. This has had and will continue to have serious implications for Blacks; despite some indications of reversal of the trend. Here is where the training needs are greatest and it means denying this needed support just at a time when Blacks are becoming involved in training programs. The denial of this kind of encouragement and hope is just another example of how to ignore obvious needs and circumvent major issues. The advocacy of our colleges and universities looms as an important, though so far a disappointing, resource in connection with this effort.

We are very pleased about the fact that Congress recently passed a new minimum wage bill. The impact in the field of aging will be profound. There were many workers, mostly Blacks, who were working in this field at the minimum wage of $1.60 an hour. We should know that if wholeness is a

goal for those being served, it is likewise a goal for those who are doing the serving. We must achieve equity and social justice for them if it is to be achieved for those being served.

We often hear of the philanthropy of the rich, but we seldom acknowledge the philanthropy of the poor. Working at $1.60 an hour as a nurse's aide in some of the nursing homes I've seen is philanthropy of the highest order. The $2.20 minimum is still far too low, but it's at least an incremental start.

The Supplemental Security Income Program got underway on January 1, 1974, setting a new national economic floor for the elderly. The big trouble with this program, however, despite its conceptual validity, is the fact that the income floor established is so miserably low. In addition the mass of confusion so far a part of its implementation and administration has hampered rather than facilitated getting new enrollees on the books.

Conceptually this is a good program for it, at least, makes available an economic floor for all the elderly. Unfortunately, however, its implementation has resulted more in "guaranteed annual poverty" than in "guaranteed annual income" primarily because of the meager benefits available and the confusion involved in establishing eligibility.

In order for it to become a really valid program, the minimum income provided, at the very least, should exceed the established poverty level in this country.

Among the recommendations are that the Federal Government should immediately establish minimums for single persons and couples above the poverty level and that there should be developed a massive alert, Federally financed, which would involve a door-to-door canvas and outreach with interpretations of benefits and entitlements perhaps done mostly by peers.

Each of us, however, does have a great responsibility in seeing that all eligible persons apply for this benefit, apply for their proper entitlements — meager though they may be — and enroll in this program.

Another Federal program, often talked about these days, but which is having little or no meaning for the Black elderly, is revenue-sharing. Only the politically sophisticated and already powerful will tend to really benefit from this program — not the people who need services the most. We are certainly not enamored with this trend.

As I once pointed out in our Caucus Newsletter, "NCBA News," we are very much concerned about developments in

the nursing home field and the implications that these developments have for the few homes for the aged attempting to provide services to older Black persons in Black communities. Of special importance are what we believe to be the punitive aspect of the invoking of the Life Safety Code. We are on a course in this country of further eroding a much needed service in Black communities which is already completely inadequate.

Applying this Code to all nursing homes and homes for the aged across the country is felt, in general, to be a good thing. Certainly the residents and patients of these facilities deserve the additional elements of safety that the Code provides. But to comply with the Code is tremendously expensive. One home in Philadelphia, for example, has estimates of a cost of $500,000 and it still may be forced to reduce its occupancy by approximately 40%. This home has no endowment or other resources to be used for this purpose. Yet the need for its services is demonstrated by the fact that it has a long waiting list. Contrast this with another non-profit church related home with a huge endowment, no Blacks, no public assistance recipients, and no waiting list, even empty beds.

In addition to mandating compliance, Federal and State Governments must develop a plan to facilitate compliance especially by those attempting to serve minorities and the poor. Our approach to this care just as to health care generally should be that access to these needed services is a "right" not a "privilege."

Many members of the National Caucus on the Black Aged view the growth and development of ACTION'S Older Americans Volunteer Program with considerable mixed emotions.

On the positive side they embrace the concepts of voluntarism and volunteerism as sound and meaningful ones. Volunteers do have an important role to play in the delivery of services to the Black and other minority elderly. Elderly Blacks, who possess all of the attributes necessary to participate in volunteer programs, also receive all of the usual rewards that come to persons who give of themselves in behalf of others. They are indeed strengthened by their experiences as Foster Grand Parents or as Retired Senior Volunteers. They appreciate the opportunity to earn some modest income, derive certain satisfactions and status, and make significant contributions of vitally needed human

services in various communities throughout the country.

Despite the feeling in many circles that these efforts are tremendously successful, we do not completely share that view.

An analysis of them in some situations reveals that they tend to perpetuate inequities and circumvent some of the real and basic issues involved. They have not been developed and planned to serve those who need them most.

In order for volunteer programs and services to be most effective they must supplement rather than attempt to supplant or replace other more fundamental programs and services. They do tend to reach, in general, those who need them the least. They are not reaching the really hard-to-reach elderly either as recipients or as volunteers because the services of volunteers or volunteer services are least appropriate for and effective in reaching these persons.

The elderly of minority groups are expected not only to carry the burden of these unfortunate circumstances, but they and other minorities in general are expected to educate the majority about the solution to the problem.

Let us face up to our responsibilities by providing the elderly — all the elderly — with a decent income well above the poverty level. Let us meet their health, housing, and transportation needs. Then let us develop a comprehensive and in-depth volunteer program, not one that follows a research and demonstration format or pattern, but one that spreads across the length and breadth of this land.

Projected Advocacy Needs

When one initially contemplates the problem of responsibility for serving as advocates for the elderly of minority groups, perhaps one's initial reaction is to develop an organization such as the National Caucus on the Black Aged and believe that this is the approach that makes the most sense and can get the job done. There is the belief that perhaps all that is needed is someone to speak in behalf of or with the minority elderly to give visibility to their special problems and to work to get those problems resolved.

To repeat, however, a deeper look into the situation reveals that the issues we are concerned with in working for improving the quality of life for aged minorities are, in general, the same issues that face our total society and their resolution will determine the future course of this country.

When we call upon the President and the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development "to develop plans for correcting and replacing the deteriorated housing in which 75% of aged Blacks live and for maintaining home ownership among the Black aged in the face of urban renewal and other programs" we are in a sense telling the nation that one of its top priorities should be in the provision of low income housing for all who need such housing.

When we call upon the President and the Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare "to develop plans for a moderate, liveable income for the aged — an income meeting Bureau of Labor Statistics standards," we are saying that one of this country's top priorities ought to be to provide a liveable income to all impoverished and destitute and without regard for their employability or other circumstances.

The implication of our call upon the President and the Commissioner of the Administration of Aging "to develop proposals for adequate non-discriminatory programs and services, including transportation and police protection" is to indict our impoverished mass transit system and the role of the police across this land and to demand Federal intervention to help put the house in order.

The issues that keep surfacing are the same ones that this nation must face squarely in the period just ahead or have its sheer survival threatened.

Perhaps there is some justification for special groups such as NCBA in an advocacy role designed simply to improve the quality of life of older persons of minority groups, but the needed changes for these persons to really achieve and maintain first class citizenship will require considerably more political mobilization and clout than an organization such as the Caucus could ever expect to mount. Yet, we must begin!

To get to the deeper aspects of the problems involved, it's not just inadequate income, poor housing, poor health care that we are concerned about. We are indeed concerned about achieving all of the benefits that a democratic society should accord all of its citizens

Our major thrust must be in the nature of achieving a reordering of the nation's priorities and bringing about needed systemic change.

Our task then is at least twofold in its broadest aspect. We must immediately seek positive action in behalf of the

Black elderly but we must also join with others in a 'Common Cause" approach to the problems of the larger society.

I think we must realize that any efforts we undertake specifically in behalf of the Black elderly must be taken with comprehensive understanding of our human and public services problems of the aging and aged generally, let alone the problems of specific minority groups, until we begin to have some impact on the problems of the larger society.

I recently had the opportunity of attending a Symposium put on by the National Association of Social Workers having to do with "Social Justice and Social Work Practice."

At that symposium there was an effort to explore the contemporary application of the principles and concept of social justice to social work practice in these four major delivery systems: Income Maintenance, Physical and Mental Health, Public Education, and Juvenile and Criminal Justice.

The most meaningful relevance of that conference to my own concerns was the recognition of many, or perhaps even most, of the delegates that there are two sub-systems operative within each of these four major delivery systems — one for the poor and one for the more affluent. It is in these systems that we see America's two most urgent and as yet unresolved domestic problems again manifesting themselves. I refer to the problems of racism and poverty. Obviously there is an urgent need to develop one human service system to deal with the urgent problems of health, education, welfare as well as law and order.

We must work together more for the elimination of the causes of our problems and work more for solutions rather than simply to react (or over-react) to effects and symptoms.

Until these things are done, inadequate delivery will continue to plague us and simply compound an already unworkable system or non-system.

Any system reduced to its ultimate component is people and the system is no better than the people who carry its services. How important, then, to spread the base of advocacy. Supporting the efforts and ideas of an organization such as ours should be a people's lobby such as Common Cause, including many voluntary organizations, Black and white, as well as governmental efforts such as the U. S. Senate's Special Committee on Aging. We would hope a similar distinguished group from the House of Representatives would add its voice to the swelling chorus.

Speaking in their own behalf the aged can clearly enunciate their own desires and will as they too join in the coalition. One of the most important strategies of advocacy is in the ability to coalesce with others.

In my opinion the Common Cause prototype offers some hope to ease our frustration. But in this approach we must discover ways and means to involve the poor without their having to pay dues.

It is true that, in terms of national action, small groups of crusading citizens won the vote for women and abolished child labor. Oldsters have achieved Medicare. Other groups have been successful in their own individual efforts. There must, however, eventually be more of a concerted, concentrated, and continuous effort.

If the imporverished people of this country ever forgot about race, age, and other divisive aspects of their situations and focused on their common condition — "poverty" — and worked together to get rid of it, there's no doubt that poverty could be eradicated.

Much of the unrest of the young is due to their need for meaningful involvement. What better way to close the generation gap than to make them aware that their lot is not so bad when the promise of their future is viewed in the light of the aged's present? Let's engage them in a new kind of struggle with goals achievable in their lifetime.

The National Caucus on the Black Aged was born out of this type of concern — concern that the White House Conference on the Aging would dilute the critical and special need of the black and other minority aged, thereby weakening the effects of the total attack on the problems of the nation's elderly. By highlighting this black segment we reinforce and highlight the plight of all. The National Caucus on the Black Aged is nurtured in hope — hope drawn from the burgeoning interest and support from Black and white across the land. The National Caucus on the Black Aged must forge its purpose into policy and its policy into action.

The dictionary defines *advocate* in two ways: first as "one that pleads the cause of another" and then as "one who argues for, defends, maintains, or recommends a cause or a proposal," and I might add one who is willing to fight for the implementation of his or her concerns. Let us opt for the second definition which impels us to the universal issues. We cannot do what must be done alone. How can a "bootstrap" approach work when there are no "boots" or "straps"? In

order to do the things we have enunciated will require massive mobilization of resources. But what better point to start a human services system than at the point of the existence of the most extreme inequity?

One of our efforts includes the establishment of The National Center on the Black Aged, a special project of the NCBA, made possible by an AoA grant and opened in Washington in October, 1973. The Center was established to provide a comprehensive program of coordination, communication, information, and consultative services to meet the need for improving meaningful policies for and programs involving aged Blacks. Its activities include research, information dissemination, technical and training assistance, curricular and legislative developments and promoting effective training and expansion of Black professionals and paraprofessionals in the field of aging.

The Center hopes to become the National Clearinghouse on information about aged Blacks.

Mandate for the Future

We urge support of this effort as well as the implementation of all of our recommendations made at the 1971 White House Conference on Aging and reflecting the articulation of need and action as expressed by the Black elderly themselves.

Color is the great divide in this country. Others may suffer some inequities because of their religion or other circumstances, but the full weight of racism and prejudice must be born by Blacks, Indians, the Spanish-speaking, and Asian Americans.

Will Blacks and other minorities get a fair share of the new funds and programs becoming available in the field of aging? Will the Federal Government finally adopt some kind of performance criteria to see that elderly Blacks are at least served by these programs to the extent of their population representation? Current programs are inadequate. Matching funds requirements have no meaning to minorities because of their inability to get the matching funds together. Will the Federal Government, under its own initiative, begin to recognize and deal with these inequities or will it continue to program all of us for failure? Must the initiative always come from those who don't have the power or the resources to change things? We must eliminate the bureaucratic difficul-

ties built into a system that requires that those can succeed who have already been successful — that the resources go to those who get there "first" with the "most" leaving the rest of us to compete for the most meager of resources.

As we move ahead, the overall attack must be an attack on powerlessness. The overall objective must be the redistribution of power, — social, economic, and political — as the primary means of destroying these barriers to an open society. A redistribution of income is vital if the Black elderly are to be removed from the kind of grinding poverty that no one was meant to endure. The implementation of a goal of power for the powerless would give the minority elderly the priority position they deserve.

Instead of the President, Congress, the governmental bureaucrats lamenting our economic scarcity, a creation of our own ineptitude, we simply need to concentrate more on the removal of these inequities. We need to move in these directions:

From problem-solving to system-changing
From servicing to belonging
From emphasis on the improvement of race relations to the elimination of racism and achievement of social justice
From liberalism to liberation
From an emphasis on changing interpersonal relations to a basic change in power relations
From emphasis on equality to equity and empowerment
From giving equal opportunity to creating an equitable society.

I should like to close on a positive note. I am convinced that we have the means and the resources to deal with our human and humane problems in an effective manner and to create a world in the 21st century that will handle its social, economic, political situation as well as its demographic and technological aspects. If this is to happen, we must all make as our immediate goals the prevention of further cutbacks in social programs and the drastic reordering and modification of national priorities so as to require reallocation of the nation's wealth to eliminate poverty and empower all the poor. Coalitions in this direction must be formed now. The achievement of equity and justice for the Black aging and aged is more than a program to simply improve the quality of life and to secure a greater share in America's abundance for a small fraction of the American people. It is more than a

simple effort to implement the noble phrases of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The achievement of our goals and objectives for aging and aged Blacks may well be a microcosm of the only way to preserve this country as a free, peaceful and viable society.

The story of the Black elderly is one of heroism, strength, and fortitude in the face of fantastic odds against them. Despite their multiple hazards, they continue to play a vital role in maintaining togetherness, stability, and cohesion in Black families.

No one is meant to live in poverty. No one is meant to tolerate the wrongs of oppression and repression. Where poverty exists, all are poorer. Where hate flourishes, all are corrupted. Where injustice reigns, all are unequal.

If we really believe this, a better world may emerge around us through the building of effective coalitions for action and all of us will be better off for the experience — and our "great" country, now in deep, deep trouble may really be saved.

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a case study of advocacy 10

Barbara Kaplan

In attempting to discuss advocacy in the field of Aging, three factors come to mind. First, defining advocacy; second, viewing advocacy as both a means to an end, and as an end in itself; and third, considering the relationship of advocacy to democracy.

Advocacy Defined

Advocacy may be defined as "... the exertion of influence of a group in the arena of social policy for the purposes of eliciting change, or using the veto of proposed change, for the benefit of a particular class or group of interests." This definition was offered by Brenda Walsh of the Administration on Aging. Within the context of this definition, an organized group of persons actively involved in influencing conditions affecting the quality of their daily life would be seen as a group of advocates.

Self-help, mutual help and cooperation are words often used to describe the ways persons can act to advocate on their own behalf. Mr. John Rainsbury, the English correspondent for the International Senior Citizens News (1975), writes, ". . . on the basis of 'self-help' people themselves would identify what the factors are that militate against their fulfillment or what additional services would allow them to lead a fuller and more active life."

Manser (1973) provides still another definition of advocacy. Here it is viewed " . . . as an instrument for social action. As such, it brings the dimension of breadth or largeness to plans and programs directed toward change and, at the same time, supplies the vitality and dedication that are important assets." This definition is offered by the Family Service Association of America as a way of approaching social problems by responding to social conditions. Their perspective is that *social action is the business of social work;* that is the supporting view for this case study.

Advocacy as Both a Means to an End and as An End in Itself

The implications of using advocacy as a mode of intervention within a community may be seen as twofold. As a means to an end, the goal of advocacy may be to achieve realization of those changes that the community identifies as essential for the maintenance, support or protection and enhancement of life for those living within its boundaries. The changes may include: improvement in transportation; provision of nutrition programs; increased availability of education and/or recreation programs; accessibility to legal and social services; additional housing, or action to halt the proposed construction of a freeway through the center of the community.

As an end in itself, the joining together to influence changes within the community has ramifications for the psychological and social well-being of the participants in the process. Since membership within social organizations is a primary means of influence in society, the role losses experienced as a result of living longer place many older persons outside existing power structures. By organizing to advocate on their own behalf, older persons provide themselves with a structure through which they can make their influence felt. Thus older persons, by assuming responsibility for action on issues that affect the quality of their daily lives, restore to themselves some of the power necessary to affect the direction of their existence. In addition, membership in a group can serve as a basis for new social relationships to replace those lost; it can re-awaken a sense of belonging which can lead to recapturing a sense of self-esteem.

Advocacy and Democracy

Inherent within a democratic system of government is the responsibility of each group to make its needs known and to assume responsibility for working toward fulfillment of those identified needs. The democratic process also presumes that the needs of competing interests will be taken into consideration and that conflicts will eventually be resolved within the context of the general welfare of the community.

The existence of organizational structures provides a means of establishing linkages among groups which enables this process to unfold. Planning, cooperation or coordination are only possible when different groups within a community share their varied ideologies and the basis for their varied needs. A pluralistic society, encompassing the breadth of ethnic, and minority groups, each with their unique cultural values, cannot function successfully with the interaction and exchange of these groups on a local level.

Advocacy, therefore, is neither merely a means used by individuals to achieve their personal ends, nor merely the expression of group preference in the arena of social policy. Rather, it is an essential mode of intervention upon which a pluralistic society depends as a basis for the resolution of resolving the competing interests that reflect the varied values and needs of its members.

The Evolution, Over Time, Of Alternate Modes of Advocacy Within a Given Community

The following case study is presented within the parameters of the definitions of advocacy as social action; the view of advocacy as both a means to an end and as an end in itself; and the integral relationship between advocacy as a mode of intervention and the democratic society in which we live.

A case study of a social service agency's role in promoting advocacy as a method of intervention within a community densely populated by older persons will be presented.

A Place To Begin – The Neighborhood Committee

After a careful survey of the community's needs and composition, the agency decided to organize a Neighborhood

Committee. The agency's purpose was twofold: to help the elderly residents effect those changes in the community that they felt would make the community a more viable place to reside, and also to involve the elderly residents on issues of central concern to them. The survey also revealed that the elderly within the community used local services, almost exclusively, and that the medical, dental, legal, and social work professionals were well acquainted with many of the elderly individuals within the population. This relationship also existed between the population and the local recreation and education program directors.

Included within the community's boundaries were twenty-seven congregate care facilities (both residential and convalescent), which housed approximately 5% of the community's 17,000 elderly.

The agency agreed that simultaneous with opening its local office, it would bring together individual elderly residents, professionals, administrators and board members of the sponsoring agency, and through the structure of a Neighborhood Committee help establish advocacy as an integral intervention technique within the community right from the start. Included were: medical doctors, a dentist, lawyers, a pharmacist, administrators of congregate care facilities, directors of local recreation and education programs, representatives of local political officials, Committee on Aging members (a standing committee of the sponsoring agency), a representative of a local real estate organization, and those few identified interested elderly residents who were concerned with bringing about necessary changes within the community. The administrator of the newly opened, community-based agency office was given responsibility for establishing the Neighborhood Committee and providing whatever assistance was necessary to its functioning.

The 30 members agreed to meet twice a month and to reserve that time as a priority until the committee's work got underway at which time they would shift to meeting only once a month. The Neighborhood Committee saw its function as identifying gaps in community services and proposing strategies and tactics to achieve the necessary services to respond to the identified unmet needs. After a period of two months, the Committee had elected its officers, members had volunteered to act as chairpersons, and decisions were made to focus on the following needs: transportation, community improvement, outdoor resting

areas, availability of public toilet facilities, adjustment of traffic signal timing, and conditions and programs within congregate care facilities.

The Many Faces of Advocacy

Within the first several meetings after elections and appointments were completed, it became apparent rather quickly that the varied underlying reasons motivating individuals to serve as members were primarily related to their own interests rather than to the needs of the community elderly. Representatives felt they wanted to keep abreast of what was "going on in the area," but had no intention of actively engaging themselves on behalf of the community. Instead they saw the Committee's function as advisory to both the sponsoring agency and the elderly members of the Committee. Although many of the Committee members were familiar with the community's elderly residents as individuals, they did not interpret existing community conditions as contributing to problems for the elderly residents, as a group.

The fact that only the elderly members lived within the community while other members commuted to adjacent or outlying areas revealed a basis for differences in perception of what was needed to make the community more viable and responsive to the needs of the elderly population. In addition, business and political considerations made the professional, administrative and political representatives biased toward issues that were likely to evoke the least controversy and that were of broader concern to the whole community rather than to the elderly specifically.

One of the first issues to be brought to the Committee by community residents was a request that an alley be paved. It was full of potholes and stagnant water, and was dangerous to the safety of the community residents who often used it as a short cut. Many of the members felt that this was not an appropriate concern for the Committee since owners whose business or residential property bordered on the alley would be required to pay increased taxes to cover the costs. Community elderly pointed out this was the only unpaved alley in the community, and that any taxes that were levied were minimal and pro-rated over a long period of time. The Committee could not resolve its conflicts and no tactics were proposed. One of the active elderly members took it upon

himself to circulate a petition among the property owners to determine whether or not they would object. The one-man campaign concluded with the paving of the alley after a hearing had been held at which not even one property owner appeared to oppose the project.

The next issue brought to the attention of the Committee was the need for a transportation system within the community that would enable the residents to get to medical clinics, to shop in nearby department stores, and to maintain social contacts with friends in nearby areas. For several months Committee members worked hard, bringing in reports on alternate solutions only to discard them one by one for various reasons, such as cost of initial outlay, the need to induce a sponsoring agency to maintain the program, and the cost of insurance. A proposal that a time-limited mini-bus system sponsored for publicity purposes by a local bank was investigated and finally rejected as interfering with the rights of the Rapid Transit System. The local social service agency, meanwhile, in response to the urgency of the identified need, was involving older persons as transportation volunteers. As a result of this demonstration a local mortuary offered one of its limousines on an experimental basis. Unfortunately, six ill, elderly persons crowded into one vehicle did not prove to be a viable alternative to their transportation needs. But by this action the Neighborhood Committee had alerted the community to the importance of developing an adequate transportation system.

A third area finally served to crystallize the existence of irreconcilable interests among Committee members. This was the need for programs that would involve the elderly residents living in congregate care facilities. The lack of contact with the surrounding community was having devastating psychological effects upon the residents. The recognition that this fate might befall any one with time made the older persons in the community sensitive to the needs of this section of the population. The almost automatic response of the Committee members was that any attempt to bring programs into the facilities would be interpreted as interference, even though the idea might be "a good one." Administrators objected, claiming that they knew what was best for "their people." One of the myths that the administrators based their objection on was that older volunteers in the community would not want to carry out programs in congregate facilities for the elderly. Only one

administrator agreed to think about allowing such a demonstration to take place. As a result of these differences no action was taken.

Identification of the Key Role of the Elderly Committee Members

With time, certain changes had been occurring within the Committee. First, the shift to monthly, from bi-monthly, meetings had transpired. Most administrators were attending meetings only sporadically, while professionals attended intermittently, if and when they had the time. Agendas, mailed out with announcements of the monthly meetings, served as notice to special interest groups, enabling them to select to attend only those meetings related to their individual concerns, (i.e., licensing, medical coverage, homemaker services, increased rental costs, consideration of freeway construction, etc.).

At the end of the first year, an evaluation of the Committee's work resulted in a recommendation that those members who attended out of personal versus community interests be asked to resign from the Committee. Costs to the community in terms of time, money and lost opportunities were cited as the basis for the suggestion.

What had also been evolving during the year was the emergence of a small group of enthusiastic, active elderly persons under the leadership of one key individual whose personal priority was the bringing about of community change. One of the functions this group served was to establish contact with organizations and clubs of older persons, in the community. Through this means, the Neighborhood Committee was kept informed of the community's needs, and in turn the community groups were kept aware of what issues the Committee was considering and what actions they were taking.

The Neighborhood Committee started its second year with only ten members, six of whom were active, elderly residents. It became clear that the original organizational structure was no longer in existence. Official recognition was made of this fact by the dissolution of the Neighborhood Committee with the approval of the board of the sponsoring agency. The existence of the Committee had provided the ground for the nucleus of a grass-roots organization to emerge.

Advocacy Structure #1, Conclusions

Although ostensibly a group may agree on its purpose and function, inevitably its composition (one of the elements of structure) will be decisive in determining the strategies and tactics it will adopt. The strategies selected to make the community more viable for its elderly residents and the tactics proposed for the accomplishment of these goals will stem from the perceptions of the members of the organization.

At the time the Neighborhood Committee was proposed, no identified group of organized elderly existed which could serve as a vehicle for bringing about community change. Yet, the need to address the problems within the community required that an organization be formed based on identified and available forces. Also, by establishing a functioning Neighborhood Committee in the community, interested elderly residents could then be attracted to membership.

The formation of a Neighborhood Committee, therefore, was an attempt to involve the elderly in working for change on their own behalf. It was also an attempt to increase community involvement and awareness of the needs of the elderly by eliciting the support of other sections of the local community through membership on the Committee. The Neighborhood Committee successfully carried out both these functions.

Because of the diverse interests it represented, the Committee selected to interpret its advocacy role as being merely an advisory one. This precluded their seeking out and exploring social action tactics that would involve the community elderly as well as other concerned segments of the population. Thus, although members might agree upon ends or strategies, they could not agree upon tactics that would engage the community.

Thus, it appears that the inclusion of members with varied and competing interests within one organization tends to divert the organization from its goals. Nevertheless, the Neighborhood Committee provided the basis for a grass-roots nucleus to form, gain experience, and establish links with other organized groups of elderly in the community. With the dissolution of the Neighborhood Committee, the next model of social action emerged as a Community Issues Committee, composed of this nucleus.

Community Issues Committee

The sponsoring agency's commitment to involve the elderly residents of the community was carried out through giving guidance to the leader of the Community Issues Committee by making him a member of the policy making body of the local district office. In addition, regularly scheduled conferences of the Committee were held with the administrator to discuss strategies, tactics, allocation of tasks and responsibilities. Consultation with leaders of other groups of organized elderly occurred from time to time as the need arose. The Committee was composed of elderly residents only. They tended to perceive their community from a similar perspective and quickly moved into a more aggressive pursuit of their goals.

The role of the chairperson of the Committee was to develop a network of relationships among the leaders of the various community groups of older persons. (Beyond the need for cooperation, however, was the perspective of developing a council of organizations that would coordinate their efforts on a community-wide basis.) On-going contact with senior center groups, park and recreation clubs, community center organizations, social service agency groups, and residents in congregate care facilities formed the basis for a concerned constituency that could be mobilized to respond to issues as they arose.

The Committee members prepared and circulated information sheets suggesting issues which required immediate action, identifying those which could best be responded to by telegrams, letters, personal delegations or community-wide meetings. Members organized small groups of residents to visit neighborhood stores and gas stations requesting that they make their toilet facilities available to the public and remove coin boxes which placed a financial burden on the elderly. Visits were made to the city councilman requesting his intervention in securing a traffic signal at a crossing in front of the local high school. (Thus, enabling older persons desiring to attend adult classes to cross a busy street safely, instead of walking two blocks to the next intersection which had a signal.) A request for a local minipark where older persons could sit and visit outdoors was accompanied by a petition with 4,000 signatures. In time, all these requests were fulfilled. In addition, more benches, strategically placed so that elderly persons who had to walk a distance to do their

shopping could rest enroute, was also a welcomed community change.

When city, county, state or federal hearings related to issues of concern to the community were held downtown, the Committee hired buses to transport the residents. (The buses were paid for by contributions of $1.00 per person for round trip transportation.) Proposition A, which was to provide for construction of 500 housing units for the elderly in each councilmanic district, found the community residents actively engaged in securing its passage.

In time, that older persons were alert and active participants in their own behalf achieved recognition from local political figures. Their ability to vote as an informed bloc identified them as a group with considerable local influence.

Advocacy Structure #2, Conclusions

In contrast to the Neighborhood Committee, which saw its function as an advisory one, the Community Issues Committee in pursuit of the twofold purpose proposed, conceived of its function as involving the older residents of the community in social action. Once again, composition of membership is seen as a critical influence. It appears, therefore, that organizations composed of individuals with similar needs, interests and shared perspectives, are better able to agree upon strategies and tactics to achieve their goals.

It was through the efforts of the members of the Community Issues Committee that older persons in the community became active in their own behalf, and realized some of their goals in pursuit of making the community a more viable place to live. By their activity they also awakened the neighborhood to the existence of a vocal, aware group of elderly persons, in their midst.

The viability of participatory democracy was once again demonstrated as this section of the population entered the arena with a unified position and through a process of interaction and exchange with competing interests resolved issues of concern to the entire community. Within a democracy, advocacy by each group (based on their unique interests) is acknowledged to be the process of resolution.

The year's experience of organizations working together on common goals and the fact that many of the issues

confronted were successfully resolved gave impetus to the formation of a Community Coordinating Council of Organizations of Older People.

Summary

Often a more effective organizations structure evolves only after a community has experimented with alternative forms. This period of experimentation provided by the existence of the Neighborhood Committee allowed those nascent forces to emerge which then became the basis for the more effective structure.

What was needed to help restore to the elderly their power to affect the quality of their daily life as well as to give it direction was a means of participating in the life of the community once again. This was provided by the Community Issues Committee. The opportunity to use their experience served as a stimulus to an increased sense of social and psychological well-being for some participants, while for others the potential for establishing new social relationships revived their sense of self-worth.

Thus, how an organization interprets its purpose and what it conceives as its function in achieving its goals will be influenced by a key element of structure . . . the composition of the membership. In turn, purpose, function and composition will affect which strategies and tactics will be adopted in the service of advocacy.

Time has shown, however, that even the most effective structure is only temporary. As an organization succeeds (or fails) in its advocacy role, new concerns, and new alignments of forces result. Not only do the community's needs and concerns change, but those older persons who were active at one period of time, contributing their unique skills and knowledge, may not remain active. As new human resources become available and as conditions change with time, a new configuration of community potential emerges. Advocacy may remain as the preferred mode of intervention but the organizational form it will assume, and the issues it will challenge will continually evolve.

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THIS CHAPTER IS DEDICATED TO JACOB NEWAR, AN ACTIVE ELDERLY ADVOCATE, WHO BY HIS CONTRIBUTION TO HIS COMMUNITY MADE THE NEIGHBORHOOD A MORE LIVEABLE PLACE FOR THE ELDERLY RESIDENTS.

advocacy and age

III.

strategies

11 Advocacy and the necessity of legal services

Paul Nathanson and
John C. Lamb

(Note: this chapter appeared originally in "A manual of funding resources and models for delivering legal services to the elderly," prepared by the National Senior Citizens Law Center as a working tool for the 1976 Law and Aging Training Seminar. It follows the referencing style of that publication.)

THE NEED

Perhaps more than any other group, the elderly rely upon complex public and private institutions for their daily subsistence. Therefore, their legal problems frequently relate to the policies and actions of governmental agencies and private corporations, both of which often present undecipherable bureaucratic mazes which even younger persons find difficult to manage. Many of those elderly people now classified as "poor" were, at one time, a part of the mainstream of middle America, and became poor only when forced to live on fixed incomes at age 65. Worse, the income of these newly-poor elderly people is constantly reduced by inflation.

Superimposed upon the lives of the low-income elderly is a vast array of complex statutory, regulatory, and decisional law. Their shelter may be provided or secured under federal and state public and subsidized housing laws, relocation laws, environmental protection laws, and zoning

laws. Their health is often dependent upon Medicare, Medicaid, laws regulating nursing homes, and laws relating to the advertisement of prescription drugs. Their nutrition is often secured by the Food Stamp Program and nutrition programs established by other federal laws. The source of their income may be Social Security, Supplemental Security Income under Title XVI of the Social Security Act, or private pensions. The dignity of personal freedom and control of property is subject to the vagaries of the law of guardianship, conservatorship, and involuntary commitment.

Thus, the elderly are, on the one hand, confronted with a vast complex of crucial legal issues, bureaucracies, and forms with which to deal; and on the other hand, they have no real place to turn for adequate and effective assistance. Unlike younger people, who have been forced from birth to live under governmental programs and large bureaucracies, today's elderly have not learned to "work the system." Because the elderly have no place to turn for assistance, and because they are not adept at working the system, the elderly as a distinct group in our population are the least able to deal with issues of a legal nature.

The unmet need of the elderly for legal service has been recognized by the most prestigious sections of the federal government considering the needs of the elderly. Joint hearings held by the Senate Committee on Aging and the Judiciary Subcommittee on Representation of Citizen Interests on June 14, 1974, clearly indicate that the nation's elderly in many important spheres lack adequate legal representation and, therefore, access to the judicial process.[1] Statistics indicate that the low-income elderly comprise approximately six percent of the client load of the average OEO (now Legal Services Corporation) Legal Services office, although the elderly comprise over twenty percent of the nation's poor.[2] The 1971 White House Conference on Aging

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[1] See generally Joint Hearing on Improving Legal Representation of Older Americans Before the Senate Special Comm. on Aging and the Subcomm. on Representation of Citizen Interests of the Senate Comm. on the Judiciary, 93d Cong., 2d Sess. (1974).

[2] The six percent figure is an estimate resulting from an informal survey conducted by the Office of Legal Services, Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). As to the disproportionately low representation of the elderly within legal services offices, see B. Terris, *Legal Services for the Elderly*, Senior Opportunity & Services Technical Assistance

recommended: "The Federal Government (through the Office of Economic Opportunity, any successor Legal Service Agency, or other agency) should establish a special center concerning legal rights of the elderly. . . ."[3] Three of the eighteen major recommendations of the Federal Council on Aging made on September 10 and 11, 1974, relate to the provision of legal services to the elderly. On the floor of the United States Senate, Senators Tunney and Magnuson have underscored the need of the elderly for legal services in a colloquoy which appears in the Congressional Record.[4]

The Administration on Aging and the United States Congress have responded to the need of the elderly for legal services. The Commissioner on Aging has made legal services for the elderly among the Administration's highest priorities, and has set as a goal the inclusion of a legal services component within each Planning and Services Area.[5] Befitting legal services' priority, and the Administration's goal, the Administration recently awarded NSCLC and ten other grantees model project grants designed to "foster the improvement of legal services programs for the elderly, especially to contribute to the capacity of State and Area Agencies on Aging to increase the availability and raise the quality of such services in their jurisdictions."[6] The Congress of the United States has responded to the elderly's need for legal services by enacting, virtually without dissent, amendments to the Older Americans Act of 1965[7] which emphasize

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Monograph 9, National Council on Aging (1972). This early and well-documented work suggests that the reasons for this disproportionately low representation of the elderly may include the inability or lack of desire of elderly people to reach or use available poverty legal services, and the concentration of poverty attorneys on younger clients. A 1975 study of the availability of legal services to the general indigent population sheds further light on the plight of the elderly. This study, performed by the Legal Action Support Project of the Bureau of Social Science Research, demonstrates a ratio of one legal services attorney to 13,239 eligible poor persons. Further, over 40% of the financially eligible persons in the United States live in locations providing no access whatsoever to legal services projects. 9 Clearinghouse Rev. 469 (1975).

[3] White House Conference on Aging, Protective and Social Support: Report of the Special Concerns Sessions 29-30 (1971).

[4] See Congressional Research of Sept. 16, 1974 at p. S16686.

[5] Information Memorandum, A0A-IM-76-19, August 25, 1975.

[6] Id.

[7] 42 U.S.C. §§3001, et seq. The 1975 Older Americans Act Amendments are Pub. L.94-135.

legal services for the elderly as distinct from the Act's other social services, and authorize and encourage the disbursement of funds for the establishment of programs to deliver legal services to the elderly.

THE LAWYER'S ROLE[8]

Title III of the Older Americans Act[9] outlines social services which are to be delivered to older persons in a comprehensive and coordinated manner (§301). These Title III social services include health services, continuing education, welfare services, counseling, services to assist older people to avoid institutionalization, and any other services necessary for the general welfare of older persons (§302). An examination of lawyer's activities on behalf of older persons demonstrates that providing legal services not only accomplishes these Title III services frequently, but often acts to coordinate their comprehensive delivery.

Lawyers basically provide older persons three types of services which coordinate with the Older Americans Act and other legislation designed to benefit older Americans.

1. Information and Referral

First, lawyers act as information and referral services in terms of the Older Americans Act and Title XX of the Social Security Act.[10] Perhaps 90% of the types of problems which bring an older person to an attorney affect the older person's daily life, but do not result in a specific legal response or in the framing of a legal question which might

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[8] The following discussion, although entitled "The Lawyer's Role," implicitly encompasses paralegals. NSCLC is convinced that paralegals are an invaluable service delivery resource, and that paralegals will become increasingly relied upon to deliver legal services in all sectors as their acceptance grows.

Since paralegals are not at present universally accepted, and since they must be supervised by a lawyer, they are usually viewed as adjuncts to lawyers in the delivery of legal services, rather than prime service delivery personnel. This stereotype is unfortunate, since paralegals perform many of the same functions as lawyers, and are permitted to appear in a representative capacity before federal administrative agencies under §6(b) of the Administrative Procedure Act. Indeed, the National Paralegal Institute maintains that if not for paralegals delivering legal services in the governmental benefit area, such services would not be delivered. It should be borne in mind, then, throughout the course of this manual that many of the tasks described

ultimately lead to litigation or drafting of a legal document. As established above, the older person's life is affected by a maze of federal, state, and private bureaucracies. A lawyer with expertise in programs such as food stamps, SSI, Medicare, or Social Security often provides substantial legal service to an older person by informing the older person of government benefits program eligibility requirements, by assisting in the completion of appropriate forms, by explaining rights under government benefit programs, and by calling the appropriate administrative offices when the older person encounters problems in attempting to obtain government benefits to which the older person is legally entitled. Thus, legal services for the elderly often is more akin to Information and Referral than traditional poverty law litigation.

In many respects, then, a lawyer provides the same kind of non-legal service that is provided through social service programs. But legal service is not simply another social service, such as transportation or in-home care. In the first place, legal service acts to create access to all other social services, including health services, welfare services, counseling, obtaining adequate housing, and avoiding institutionalization, as exhorted by §302 of the Older Americans Act, and transportation, in-home care, and residential repair, as mandated by new §305(b) of the Act.

In the second place, unlike a social service, which can be delivered effectively by a person with general training, legal services cannot be delivered effectively by a person not trained in the law. This is because of the peculiar interrelationship between the substantive areas of law affecting the elderly. For example, eligibility for benefits under Title II of the Social Security Act is, in general, a

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as being the province of the lawyer are also the province of the paralegal. See especially pages 67-68 herein.

The National Paralegal Institute has extensive materials on the paralegal movement, including *Paralegals, Legal Services, and Senior Citizens: Some Basic Questions Answered (1976); Paralegal Functions and Legal Constraints (1975);* and *The Significance of Paralegals in the Legal Services Program (1975).* These materials, and others, may be obtained through the National Paralegal Institute, 2000 P Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

[9] 42 U.S.C. §§3021-3028, as amended. 29 U.S.C.A. §3029 (1975).

[10] 42 U.S.C. §§301, et seq.

predicate for eligibility for inpatient hospitalization under Part A Medicare, Title XVIII of the Social Security Act, and the latter, in turn, contains provisions which must be understood in order to understand Title XIX of the Social Security Act (Medicaid); an understanding of eligibility for Title XIX benefits, in turn, cannot exist without a comprehension of the provisions of Title XVI of the Social Security Act which creates the Supplemental Security Income program. A single client, therefore, could have a problem requiring an understanding of welfare laws, the Social Security law, and health law affecting the elderly. By the same token, the problem of age discrimination reaches into the field of pensions, employment, labor relations, landlord/tenant and consumer affairs. The subject of housing for the elderly overlaps with nutrition programs and various social services programs under federal and state law. Private pensions are often tied to eligibility for Social Security disability benefits. Attorneys and paralegals, trained in the law, are the persons most capable of effectively delivering full service to elderly clients facing such complicated situations.

A final aspect of this first basic service provided by lawyers serving the elderly is the preparation of educational materials for elderly clients informing them of their rights under the various programs or laws affecting their lives. This educative function activates the senior community, and makes it aware of community resources available for protecting rights of older persons. Not only does such a function fulfill the continuing education goal of §302, but also reinforces the Information and Referral Service by establishing links between existing resources.

2. Routine Litigation

A second basic service provided by lawyers to their elderly clients is routine litigation. For example, lawyers can defend their elderly clients against evictions, suits to enforce unfair consumer contracts, or repossessions of goods bought on credit. Lawyers will often bring affirmative suits or appear at administrative hearings to establish their elderly client's eligibility for government benefits including food stamps, public assistance, Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid. Lawyers can also contest involuntary commitment of elderly persons to mental hospitals when those persons are not dangerous, or the appointment of guardians or conservators to manage the property of allegedly incompetent elderly persons. In this context, the lawyer's role is particularly vivid,

and dovetails perfectly with the Title III goal of helping older people avoid institutionalization. A recent study by the National Senior Citizens Law Center indicated that in Los Angeles, less than three percent of 1010 guardianship and conservatorship cases sampled in a one-year period involved an attorney acting on behalf of the proposed ward. Consider the Los Angeles figures in light of a recent Ohio study,[11] which showed a .942 correlation "between the presence of legal counsel and the decision not to hospitalize the patient." The lawyer's role on behalf of the elderly, and the need of the elderly for legal services, could not be more graphically illustrated.

A variation of this second basic service is providing routine legal assistance to senior groups. For example, a group of elderly people might want to become a nonprofit organization. If so, they have to incorporate and obtain a tax exemption. Lawyers do those things for the rich, and there is no reason why they cannot do the same things for senior citizens. Lawyers are aware of the various federal programs that provide loans, mortgages, and special housing grants. They can help such groups package a program for the local community with small business money, or build and finance a housing project, as they do for richer clients.

3. **Law Reform Activity**

The third basic service provided by lawyers to their elderly clients is law reform activity, which seeks to affect the rights of broad groups of people. Attorneys engaged in law reform activity on behalf of the elderly generally have as their primary goal, full and effective participation by their elderly clients in legislative programs designed and instituted to benefit their clients. These attorneys perform the watch-dog function of seeing that such programs are carried out as intended by their legislative drafters. Law reform activity can take the form of either test case litigation on behalf of a class of elderly people, or legislative or regulatory reform. Examples of test case litigation and legislative reform are set forth below. While considering these examples, which are by no means exhaustive, bear in mind the relation of

[11] Wenger and Fletcher, "The Effect of Legal Counsel on Admissions to the State Mental Hospital: A Confrontation of Professions," 10 Journal of Health and Social Behavior 66, 69 (1969). See also, Gupta, "New York's Mental Health Information Service: An Experiment in Due Process," 25 Rutgers L.Rev. 405, 438 (1971).

these activities to the goals of the Older Americans Act, and notice how these activities fulfill those goals.

- In the nursing home field, cases have been filed recently challenging nursing home conditions as a deprivation of civil and constitutional rights, and seeking state and federal enforcement of nursing home standards. One case seeks damages against the nursing home on behalf of the named plaintiff and each of the class members.
- In the area of utilities, the enactment of a city ordinance restructuring water and sewage rates to favor the elderly was recently accomplished by attorneys representing a group of elderly persons in Toledo, Ohio. By restructuring the rates to allow lower rates for less than minimum usage, these attorneys effectively put money in the pockets of the city's elderly utility users.
- In the food stamp field, the elderly component of Milwaukee Legal Services, which was created only in March, 1975, has obtained the reinstatement of SSI recipients in the Wisconsin food stamp program. The reinstatement is the result of a preliminary injunction in a lawsuit filed by the elderly component on behalf of a statewide class of 54,000 elderly and disabled SSI recipients. This preliminary injunction thus restores to each class member's SSI budget the amount previously used to compensate for the loss of food stamps under the challenged state policy.
- In the Social Security area, a lawsuit is pending which would enable divorced husbands to apply and be awarded Social Security benefits in their own right. Current law precludes divorced husbands from obtaining such benefits if their ex-wives receive such benefits Further, a possible lawsuit would prohibit the Social Security Administration from obtaining waivers from inadvertently overpaid Social Security and SSI recipients of their rights to contest the SSA's recoupment of overpayments made through government error and relied on by the recipient. Such successful resolution of either case clearly would confer substantial economic benefits on the elderly class members.
- In the SSI field, a case is pending attempting to change a statutory prohibition against awarding SSI benefits to widows and widowers not eligible for SSI benefits in their own right when such person's spouse, who is

eligible for SSI benefits, dies during the SSI application process. A favorable resolution of this case would have obviously beneficial impact on elderly persons across the nation.

- In the pension area, successful challenges to term of service and break-in-service rules will provide additional financial resources to retirees. One suit seeks to reduce the term of service necessary to qualify for pension eligibility from 15 to 10 years. A second suit seeks to abolish a break-in-service rule as to all retired employees unaware of the rule so as to qualify such persons for pensions otherwise denied them pursuant to the break-in-service rule.
- In addition, lawsuits have been brought challenging: lack of procedural due process under the Medicare and Medicaid programs; sex discrimination in the Social Security Act; mandatory retirement; and involuntary commitment or the declaration of guardianship without adequate representation at, or notice of, the hearing.

Such major litigation works hand in hand with legislative and administrative advocacy. The elderly's daily lives are concerned with the government and various governmental enactments, regulations and legislation. It is crucial that attorneys (who can understand and interpret those enactments in the best interests of the elderly) are involved in the drafting of legislation and regulations on behalf of the elderly, and in monitoring the administrative actions of agencies concerned with administering programs for the elderly.

Obviously, the elderly's main needs relate to inadequate income, housing, health care, and nutrition. As can be seen from the foregoing, legal services can do much to alleviate those admittedly basic problems on a scale and with efficiency not within the reach of the average social service office. The foregoing also illustrates that legal services can help to accomplish the specific social service goals outlined in Title III of the Older Americans Act. Finally, by virtue of the scale on which lawyers often work, the lawyers' expertise, and the concentration of legal activity in one location, the provision of legal services to the elderly can often accomplish the comprehensive and coordinated delivery of social services envisioned by the Older Americans Act.

LEGAL SERVICES AS A TOOL FOR ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF THE ELDERLY

The concept of advocacy on behalf of elderly persons is pivotal to the Older Americans Act's philosophical underpinnings. State and Area Agencies on Aging must themselves advocate the interests of the elderly, and must provide for social services which will advocate those interests. Webster's defines the verb advocate as "to plead in favor of." The noun advocate is defined, "one that pleads the cause of another; specifically: one that pleads the cause of another before a tribunal or judicial court."

Lawyers are by instinct and training advocates, and the essence of their profession is advancing and securing the position they have undertaken to support. This is implicit and amply illustrated in the foregoing essay on The Lawyer's Role [Part B]. Each of the lawyer's and paralegal's activities enumerated therein pleads in the elderly's interest. Clearly, by providing legal services, State and Area Agencies on Aging will afford the elderly most effective advocates, while simultaneously delivering to the elderly desperately needed social services.

This general advocacy is further refined under the Older Americans Act. Dr. Flemming and the Administration on Aging exhort State and Area Agency on Aging personnel to convince public and private agencies not specifically concerned with the elderly to devote their resources to the elderly, and to ensure that private and governmental agencies specifically concerned with the elderly, or with programs designed to benefit the elderly, are doing their best for the intended beneficiaries. These refined types of advocacy are natural outgrowths of delivering legal services to the elderly.

The first type of advocacy, convincing agencies not specifically concerned with the elderly to devote their resources to the elderly, is a major thrust of the Older Americans Act. This type of advocacy helps draw down and make available to the elderly additional resources previously not available. The concept pivotal to the Area Agency on Aging is that the small amount of funds allotted to the Area Agency should be used not to provide direct services, but to initiate and instigate the use of other agencies' funds for the elderly. Thus, the Area Agency on Aging may use its grant as "seed money" to induce other agencies to spend equal or greater amounts in projects coordinated on behalf of the elderly. The delivery of legal services to the elderly

envisioned by the National Senior Citizens Law Center and others involved in this area will frequently embody the seed money concept, since other potential sources of funding for these projects, such as Title XX of the Social Security Act,[12] CETA money,[13] Community Block Grant money,[14] or General Revenue Sharing money[15] hopefully will be tapped to supplement Older Americans Act funding.

This first type of advocacy also involves getting the special needs of the elderly into the consciousness and sensitivity of various state agencies, and working with the legislative branches affecting the elderly in order to apprise the legislators of special programs needed by the elderly. Attorneys can be especially useful in this type of advocacy by analyzing existing and proposed legislation to determine its effect on the elderly and the State or Area Agency. As developed above, attorneys independent of the state bureaucracy can also draft and have introduced legislation to enhance the position of the elderly.

The usefulness of legal services as a tool for advocacy on behalf of the elderly is obvious under the second type of advocacy, which involves ensuring that agencies devoted to the elderly are doing their job. Since attorneys invariably draft the legislation and regulations implemented by the state and federal governments, attorneys dedicated to the elderly are invaluable in analyzing those statutes and regulations affecting the elderly to determine, pursuant to this type of advocacy, whether agencies created by those statutes and regulations dealing with the elderly are fulfilling the requirements of the law. On those occasions when violations of statutory or regulatory precepts are discovered, the mere threat of a lawsuit can provide fantastic assistance in negotiations with agencies which are not doing their utmost as is required by their enabling legislation or regulations, and successful lawsuits against recalcitrant agencies provide impetus on a national scale for other offending agencies to comply. To be most effective as an advocacy tool, the attorneys providing these services should not be part of the governmental units involved, as are the State and Area

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[12] Supra. See Part II A 1, infra.

[13] 29 USC §802 et seq. See Part II A 4, infra.

[14] 42 USC §5301 et seq. See Part II A 5, infra.

[15] 31 USC §1221 et seq. See Part II A 3, infra.

Agencies on Aging, but rather should be specially funded legal services programs acting as advocates for the elderly.

The recently enacted Amendments to the Older Americans Act emphasizing legal services for the elderly as distinct from other social services under the Act, provide State and Area Agencies on Aging a most effective tool for advocacy on behalf of older people. Further, Title IV-A as amended provides money to train lawyers and paralegals as advocates to address the elderly's legal needs. Not only may such money be used to train lawyers and paralegals to provide legal and counseling services to the elderly, but also to:

> . . . monitor the administration of any program . . . designed to provide assistance or services to older persons, including nursing home programs . . .; and . . . [to] identify legal problems affecting older persons, develop solutions for such problems, and mobilize the resources of the community to respond to the legal needs of older persons.

It would indeed be a disservice to the elderly people State and Area Agencies are meant to serve if the unique advocacy tool afforded by the Older Americans Act were not utilized fully.

12 An Infographic Model of Media Access for Elderly Advocate Organizations

James Danowski, Ph.D.

In the broadest sense, the main objective of the elderly advocate organization is to create social change. This social change primarily involves altering the role of elderly in the society. The process of advocating social change is essentially a process of *communication.* Communication may occur through a wide variety of *interpersonal* message channels: individual to individual, individual to group, group to organization, organization to society, and all the permutations in between. In addition, advocacy communication may take place through *mediated* communication channels ranging from "micro" media such as posters, newsletters, and telephones, to "mass" media such as television, radio, newspapers, and magazines.

Advocacy efforts usually involve a varied combination of different kinds of interpersonal and mediated communication channel usage. Across a wide range of social change settings, research has yielded some general patterns for how this combination of communication channels should be organized (Rogers, 1973). Mass communication channels, effective in reaching wide and geographically dispersed audiences, are most important at the initial stages of advocating social change. Their main function in this period is to create *awareness* about the need for change, and about the new practices proposed for adoption.

Obviously, the creation of awareness alone does not mean that enduring social change has occurred. Members of the social system must regularly practice the new *behaviors* proposed by social change advocates. Stimulating people to perform new behaviors is typically best accomplished by the use of interpersonal communication strategies, typically within the context of the individual's existing community groups. Once the new behavior patterns have been initially stabilized, then mass communication is again useful as an efficient way to maintain recognition of the importance of the new behaviors and to reinforce their practice.

Although advocating social change for the elderly requires both the planned use of interpersonal and mediated communication, many organizations have much greater familiarity and success with interpersonal communication than with mediated communication. As a result, their successes tend to be localized, and poorly integrated across wide areas. The most common, often self-proclaimed deficiency in the advocate group's communication tool kit is knowledge of how to intentionally gain access to the mass media, in order to disseminate information to large groups of the public. In light of this, the focus of this chapter is on how elderly advocate organizations can more easily obtain regular access to the mass media, at low costs in capital resources.

The major aim of the chapter is to present a theoretically guided set of action strategies to improve elderly advocates' access to the mass media. An *infographic* theory of news organizations is discussed in terms of the access strategies it suggests. Before outlining the theory and strategies, two observations about media and the elderly must be noted. First, there is no conspiracy by media organizations to reduce the access of elderly advocates. Interestingly, many discussions about media and the elderly have the subtle, implicit undertone that elderly are actually conspired against by the media and particularly by the television industry. The most frequent rationale given for this conspiracy, if one is in fact given, is economic: older persons do not have enough discretionary income, and their product preferences have been fixed long ago. Therefore, few sponsors buy programming for or about the elderly.

This economic rationale may indeed by important, although perhaps much less than many would like to think. There has been recent growth in the number of ads for products used particularly by the older population. These

appear often in the national evening news programs and not surprisingly, a number of different research projects have shown that news and public affairs programming is most highly preferred by older people (Danowski, 1975). Furthermore, greater growth appears to have occurred in the use of aging characters or themes in ads designed for a general consumer audience. Older age is more frequently used as a source of authority or credibility in delivering a range of product information to the consumer. These age-linked ads relatively frequently occur with food products, and "back to the good old days" and "back to the old natural ways" themes are common.

These patterns of increasing roles in commercial television advertisements for aging suggest a weakness in the monolithic argument that because "old people are not good consumers" they have little media access. A wider range of explanations seems appropriate. One important explanation for the limited media access of elderly places less burden on the television industry and places more responsibility for access on the elderly. Elderly and their advocates have largely failed to play by the access rules of the game. These rules have operated traditionally, and other advocates, such as those for minorities and children, have used them successfully in the past. It is assumed that this lack of activity is due more to a lack of knowledge than to a lack of motivation. Thus, the remainder of this chapter will, in broad strokes, sketch a conceptual framework from which to view gaining access to the mass media. The purpose is to provide an organized way of highlighting the key rules of the media access game.

Often those concerned with practical problems such as this, scorn theory as unable to deal with the realities of social problems. However, it is the theme of this paper that theoretic conceptualization of the access process, and how aging-related organizations fit into this process, can be useful to the practitioner. This position is based on the assumption that theory can perform a number of important functions in reducing the magnitude of the access problem. First, theory may be heuristic, suggesting new ways of looking at a set of phenomena which result in useful new concepts and relationships. Second, theory suggests principles to guide the measurement of relevant phenomena. Third, theory enables the prediction of certain variables, given information about the values for other variables. Finally, this capability enables

a social system to control the relevant phenomena. Clearly, all of these basic functions are sought after by the successful practitioner. The core logic of theory and the core logic of practice are isomorphic in any successful planned human endeavor.

In this chapter the focus is on news organizations, both print and electronic. The reason for emphasizing news organizations is that elderly advocate groups typically do not have to pay money for this kind of media exposure. Infographics (Danowski, 1976a) provides the theoretic paradigm for the model. Infographics concerns how systems operate within their information environments, identifying information structures both internal and external to the system, and using network and communication entropy measures to represent these structures. Rules of structural correspondence are sought which extend across various system levels. A main feature of infographics is its view of organized human systems as *uncertainty* expanders and reducers.

In their basic operations, news organizations are primarily uncertainty reduction systems. Their general objective is to reduce the variety and complexity of the ongoing environment by abstracting and selecting main features from it, packaging up this information, and disseminating it to its audiences. Dimmick (1974) views news organizations such as the press and broadcast media, as the *gatekeepers* serving as a mediating system between the larger environment and society's members. These organizations map events from an environment, comprised of almost infinite numbers of events, into their inputs. This mapping from environment into the organization's input process is a *sensing* process. These sensed events are then transformed within the system through a *valuation* process. Upon valuation, selected events are then mapped into the output of the organization, which results in the news product disseminated to the audience. This latter function is a *coding* process, and is added to Dimmick's two part view.

Uncertainty is a result of incompleteness in the integrating patterns among a set of elements which are conceptually discriminated and differentiated. Uncertainty increases as the variation in pattern completeness is greater than the variation normally preferred by the system (Danowski, 1976b). In accomplishing the sensing, valuation, and coding processes, the news organization experiences

three corresponding groups of uncertainty. Potential *universe identification uncertainty* concerns the definition or identification of the overall information environment, comprised of a wide range of events. Once the universe of events is identified, some of this initial uncertainty is reduced as the news organization selects a subset of all identified events and inputs them for subsequent valuation and coding. Involved in this is actual *universe selection uncertainty*. An additional type of uncertainty, corresponding to the coding process, is *output composition uncertainty*. This concerns the manner in which the news message is organized and packaged, and the nature and degree of interpretation given to it.

Within the context of this uncertainty view of news organizations Dimmick suggests the following assumptions and propositions:

1. Gatekeepers are uncertain which events are to be defined as news
2. Gatekeepers' potential universe identification uncertainty is reduced by: a) accepting the definition of news of an "opinion leader" with which he works, b) arriving at a group consensus, c) monitoring the output of a reference institution, d) accepting the policy of the organization for which he works, e) accepting the definitions of news promulgated by the sources, and f) using his own group-related attitudes and values
3. Gatekeepers' decision spaces are multidimensional. The dimensions of the space are the criteria the gatekeeper uses to select news from the potential universe for broadcast or publication
4. The gatekeeper's actual universe selection uncertainty is reduced (i.e., the partial order is mapped into a simple order), by the compositional models used by the gatekeeper.

To these we add:

5. The gatekeeper's output composition uncertainty is reduced by structural formulae for message construction. As with universe selection uncertainty, these patterns are used as a result of: a) accepting the definition of news of an "opinion leader" with which he works, b) arriving at a group consensus, c) monitoring the output of a reference institution, d) accepting the policy of the organization for which he works, e) accepting the definitions of news promulgated by the sources, and f) using his own group-related attitudes and values.

Throughout the model represented by these propositions is the process of uncertainty reduction. When considering the problem of media access by organizations advocating the positions of the elderly, the alternate means by which these organizations may aid the news organization in reducing its various uncertainties are critical points to consider. This is the bridge between theory and practice.

Governing the relationship between news organizations and creators of news, in this case the elderly advocate group, is a most pervasive set of rules involving *exchange*, including the exchange of both physical and social goods and services (for a discussion of social exchange theory in general see Homans, 1961; in the context of aging see Down, 1975). In the present context, how do the concepts and principles of an exchange approach apply? Assume that the news organization needs to reduce its uncertainty in the three basic areas in order to function properly, and also that the elderly advocate organization needs to communicate with some combination of three target groups: the elderly themselves, the general population, and political influentials. The news organization and the elderly advocate organizations may exchange information so that as a result, the news organization reduces its uncertainty, and the advocate group increases its communication with its targeted audience.

One important way the advocate organization reduces the uncertainty of the news organization is through becoming one of its "pressure groups." As a result of this force, the uncertainty space of the news organization is constricted and reduced in size. In so doing, the advocate group reduces the identification, selection, and output composition uncertainties of the news organization. The implication of the term "pressure" is critical, for it implies that it is the advocate group which must *initiate* uncertainty reducing pressure.

This pressure group model for gaining media access is consistent with the policies and practices surrounding the development of U.S. mass media systems. Fears surrounding government regulations have always motivated media organizations to attend to pressure groups which have some bearing on the regulatory process. While print news organizations are not sanctioned by governmental regulations, pressure exerted upon them works through the traditional and still strongly held ethics of social responsibility. Television organizations, on the other hand, are licensed and regulated by the Federal Communications Commission, and are required to show

evidence that their programming is in the community interest and serves community needs.

Broadcasters are sensitive to the fact that every three years television licenses come up for renewal, and that they must show evidence that the community needs are being served. More importantly, they are sensitive to the possibility that some community group will organize to challenge the license by showing that the broadcaster discriminates against some major segment of the community. Thus, in contrast to the internal values criteria of the printed press, the electronic media are primarily guided by the external criteria imposed through governmental regulation. For this reason, television broadcasters are more likely than print media to be responsive to pressure group activities.

Nevertheless, at a more basic level both will give significant attention to advocate pressure groups, due to the assistance often needed in coping with its three major types of operating uncertainties. The reason why this is an effective means of operation is that there is much more uncertainty for the news organization than it can possibly process effectively. In effect, the organization frequently appears to operate near the threshold of information overload. Under these circumstances, the news organization will attempt to use the most effective, least costly, yet successful methods for reducing this uncertainty. One relatively easy and accepted way to do this is to use the various pressure groups' uncertainty reduction. Each news organization has a set of such pressure groups to which it gives priority. The implication for the elderly advocate organization is clear: become a member of the pressure group set given high priority. This will greatly expand the probabilities that the advocate group will receive news coverage in exchange for its uncertainty reduction.

The pressure group model has been successfully used in recent history by the Black and Spanish-speaking social movements, and perhaps even more successfully by groups wishing to influence the content of television programming and advertising for children, both in terms of violence and consumer socialization. How can the elderly advocate organization become a member of the select pressure group set? The following strategies are offered in order of their suggested use. They increase in the level of threat imposed.

1. *Arrange a meeting with members of the elderly advocate organization, a small group of elderly, and the media*

organization. Cordially explain and discuss the problems of elderly, the large proportion of the media organization's audience constituted by elderly, and request more coverage either through a regular portion of the media's content, or a series, feature, or public service announcements.

2. *If television is the goal, arrive at the station with a small group of elderly and ask to examine the station logs.* This act in and of itself is likely to gain quick results, given the fear about license challenges.*
3. *Notify the media organization (particularly television) that you are planning to monitor all their programming with respect to the issues important to your advocate group.* This also raises the spectre of license challenges.
4. *If television, inform them clearly that you will challenge their license next time it comes up for renewal* (every three years).
5. *Organize a boycott of the media organization's product.* This will most likely have to be accomplished through interpersonal channels or "micro-media" such as newsletters and posters, etc.
6. *Identify a portion of media content unfavorable to the elderly. Organize a letter writing effort which indicates that the sponsor's advertised products will be boycotted.*

However, in order for the exchange between the two systems to take place, an important condition must be met. There must be a correspondence of structural patterns of information processing. As Ashby's (1968) Law of Requisite Variety suggests, for interaction between two systems to occur, there must be a similarity in the variety of structure between them. Thus, the elderly advocate group must structure its communication strategies to correspond to the structures with which the news organization is familiar. In other words, the elderly advocate organization must have its act together as well as the news organization. The remainder of this paper addresses itself to specifying some guidelines on how this can be accomplished within the three major areas of universe identification, selection, and output composition uncertainty.

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*At the time of writing, the FCC is considering making it much more difficult to successfully challenge broadcast licenses, which would reduce the effectiveness of strategies 2, 3, and 4.

Reducing Identification Uncertainty

In aiding the news organization in reducing its universe identification uncertainty, the elderly advocate organization is faced with the problem of creating events which the news organization will define as within the universe of events which may possibly become news items. Some key strategies are the following:*

1. *Create an event which is on the regular "beat" of a news organization gatekeeper, such as a reporter.* This greatly increases the likelihood of becoming an element of the universe of newsworthy events. As an example, an elderly advocate group in Los Angeles recently gained a great deal of media coverage by attending normally covered hearings about raising utilities rates. This group proposed a special lower rate package for retired persons, and won.
2. *Contact the gatekeeper directly and deliver information about the group.* Studies have shown that the most important gatekeeper to contact is the reporter with a specialty in an area related to the advocate group's orientation. Contacts with gatekeepers such as editors are usually less fruitful.
3. *Create an independent event of such interest that it receives coverage from general assignment reporters.* This typically requires the generation of an event that either nearly always receives coverage, such as a demonstration, or one that follows some theme which is currently receiving concentrated attention in the news. At the time of this writing, one example is the attention to bureaucratic misdeeds and cover-ups. For the elderly advocate, these themes might relate to such things as nursing home malpractices, mismanagement of government funds for the elderly, etc. Typically, an effective strategy to improve the probability of coverage is to call a news conference.

Reducing Selection Uncertainty

Although it is essential that the advocate organization create events which become part of the universe of potential news events, the next step is equally essential: getting the event mapped into the input processes of the news organization, i.e., getting the event selected. This can be greatly facilitated by how much the advocate organization aids in reducing the news organization's universe selection

*Some of these are discussed by Goldenberg (1975).

uncertainty. In other words, the advocate group must increase the correspondence between the structural characteristics of the event they are promoting and the structural characteristics currently being used by the particular news organization. These structural characteristics constitute its composition rules for creating the news package, or product. For example, three abstract compositional factors which are frequently cited and commonly used by the news organization are: timeliness, proximity, and conflict. The mission of the advocate group is to reduce uncertainty that their particular event fits with the appropriate compositional formula being used by the news organization. This suggests the following strategies:

1. *Talk with news organization gatekeepers to find out what compositional factors in which combination are currently used by the target news organization.* Once this is accomplished, then the event can be structured and presented so that its fit with these factors is maximal.

2. *One frequent strategy is to use a "news peg" on which to hang the event,* i.e., a current theme receiving attention in the media. This is a widespread compositional factor. One advantage elderly advocate organizations have is that aging and problems of the elderly are becoming more frequent themes in media content. Thus, the advocate organization is a news peg of its own.

3. *Create events that balance the coverage of other themes in the news.* Beyond merely "pegging" the event, the advocate organization may attempt to create another side to an issue — any issue. Many news organizations operate with a policy of overall balanced coverage. Thus, all the organization need do is examine the bias in an existing theme and create a counter-balancing chunk of information.

Reducing Output Uncertainty

Those events which meet the above macro compositional requirements for the overall media product, i.e., an entire television news broadcast, or newspaper edition, must be mapped onto a micro compositional structure for the particular news treatment or story. Some key compositional factors at this level are: format, bias, and the extent of interpretation. Below are some strategies for aiding the news organization in reducing its output uncertainty:

1. *Lobby for the creation of a regular news "hole" such as a continuing, periodic TV segment or newspaper column.* This is the most effective way to increase the need of the news organization to rely on the advocate organization to reduce its uncertainty in all three areas. Establishing a regular column or program segment greatly reduces the news organization's output uncertainty, as well as its identification and selection uncertainty.

2. *Lobby for a series, feature, or one-shot hard news item(s), in that order.* Although these reduce less output uncertainty for the news organization than a regular news hole, they nevertheless will reduce some of this uncertainty, thus increasing the likelihood of coverage.

3. *Send releases to news organizations in a form closest to that appearing in the final output.* With newspapers, for example, news releases should be written so that they may be directly entered into the news pool without more than minimal editing. Thus, basic journalistic principles as well as those pertaining to the operation of the particular news organization should be followed. For television and radio the same strategy applies. Although these organizations translate print into video or audio codes, a well designed print piece sent to these media is more likely to become translated. Also, working directly in the same medium of the broadcast organization is often not difficult. For example, it is relatively easy to design and tape a radio spot announcement and there are manuals available suggesting how to do this. Television, of course, presents economic problems for the advocate organization in producing its own messages. However, organizations such as the Public Advertising Council produces public service ads for television free of charge to advocate organizations. However, they select which spots are produced, and therefore these are important contacts for the advocate organization to foster.

4. *Send news releases directly to the particular gatekeeper most sympathetic with your position.* This greatly increases the likelihood that the advocate group receives favorable rather than negative or neutral coverage. Chances of coverage are enhanced if the particular gatekeeper, most likely a reporter, has high status within the news organization and is a specialist in the relevant area. This applies both to selecting the particular news organization to which the release is sent as well as the specific gatekeeper within the organization.

Conclusion

To summarize, this paper has from an uncertainty viewpoint, sketched an infographic model of media access by elderly advocate organizations and discussed specific access strategies in light of the theory. In conclusion, some final points merit discussion. Media access for elderly advocate groups is basically there for the taking. All that is necessary is playing the access game by the commonly practiced rules, many of which lie at the value core of our socio-cultural system. In order to consistently gain access, the advocate organization must have knowledge of the rules of the media access game, actively create information and events, and in so doing aid the news organization as much as possible in reducing its identification, selection, and output uncertainties.

For this to work, some necessary assumptions which must be met are that the advocate organization must be interested in reaching a *widespread audience* extending beyond its own membership: other elderly, the general public, or political influentials. The organization must have the skills necessary to *learn* the rules and to *coordinate* its own internal actions towards the accomplishment of the access objectives. It must have a recognizable *leadership* accountable for the actions and information of the group.

Probably the most important point to bear in mind is that all of the strategies discussed throughout this paper are virtually *free*. How much coverage a news organization will exchange for the advocate's activities in manipulating its information environment rests in the uncertainty reducing value of these activities for the news organization. The more uncertainty an advocate organization reduces for the medium, the more highly these activities are valued, and thus, the more the organization will pay for it. In this game's medium of exchange, the advocate organization is paid in column inches or minutes of air time.

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